

MANUAL of the MERCENARY SOLDIER

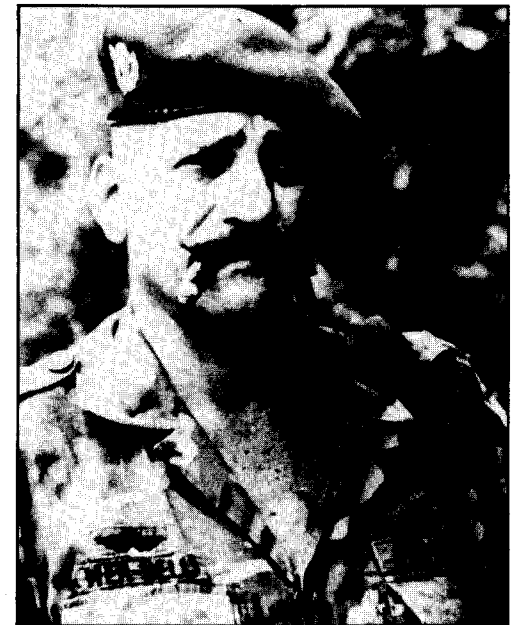
*A Guide to
Mercenary War,
Money,
and Adventure*



PAUL BALOR

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*Manual of the Mercenary Soldier:
A Guide to Mercenary War, Money, and Adventure*
by Paul Balor

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A grateful salute to a very tough Drill In-
structor, editor Paul McCarthy, who re-
lentlessly ran me through the bizarre ob-
stacle course that constitutes book writing
and publishing.

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Preface

Classic Soldiers of Fortune and Modern Mercenaries

Soldier of fortune superstar Hilaire du Berrier sees a clear distinction between "soldier of fortune" and "mercenary." As our oldest living SOF and the most renowned, du Berrier has earned the right to define the difference:

Soldiers of fortune of the Sweeney, Pollock, and Schmidt breed (of the classic SOF era between the world wars) had a code that covered everything from mode of dress to dying, and their standards were rigid. There was no greater insult to a soldier of fortune than to call him a mercenary. Mercenaries were human sheep with no say as to whom they would fight or why.

But, as the old warrior sadly admits, he is speaking of a bygone era. He contrasts his "gentlemen adventurers" with the new breed, "the bluejean- and sweatshirt-clad generation," and finds little in common.

The passage of time and changed circumstances have blurred the distinctions. Today the two terms are used almost interchangeably. And the people who actually qualify for those labels shrink from both terms. They cringe at being called mercenaries. And almost nobody has enough nerve anymore actually to call himself a soldier of fortune.

The first label makes one sound like a military whore; the other like Captain Midnight.

There's another problem complicating nomenclature. The soldier of fortune tag certainly doesn't apply to a guy who is actually in the employ of his own government. Neither does the term *mercenary* in the classic sense accurately describe Western government contract personnel in foreign conflicts—although it fits the growing numbers of Third Worlders overtly or covertly employed by Western agencies in those conflicts.

Many or most of our modern “mercenaries” and “soldiers of fortune” are in those categories. Still, there are many genuine free-lancers around—and an even larger number whose government links are both tenuous and temporary. There *are* real mercenaries and soldiers of fortune—and there *is* a difference.

The two distinct images cited by Hilaire du Berrier still linger: The mercenary is a hired hand; an SOF is a free agent. The mercenary is traditionally a field soldier; the SOF spans the whole spectrum of conflict. The merc is motivated by money; the SOF is out for glory and adventure as well as gold.

There is a lot of basic truth in both images. But both definitions are misleading. You can't typecast these people and what they do that neatly.

Today's so-called mercenaries, for instance, are mostly idealists. It's those rogues, the true SOFs, who are the real bastards. Straight mercs, particularly Americans, tend to be flag-and-country idealists. They are personally and bitterly opposed to the Communists and their Third World allies. People like them pay their own way to the wars and

fight for little or nothing. At the same time you'll meet real mercs who are walking clichés of the popular conception. Among both types are a sizable minority of misfits and mental rejects. The same is true of many of our so-called soldiers of fortune.

One distinction between the merc and SOF breeds is that the latter tend to be much looser. The SOF can laugh at himself and his world. People who call themselves mercs tend to take themselves very seriously indeed—whereas the SOF recognizes, and gleefully accepts, the absurdity factor inherent in the profession.

And it is a profession—although usually a part-time profession. That's because too many people in the business shrink at the profit motive. They accept missions for nickels and dimes and support themselves by honest toil between bouts. Too many others have discovered that it's the criminal sidelines to the business that really pay off. But you, Joe, need not be locked into either category.

Accept the profit motive. Accept the fact that you have to buy groceries and pay the rent. Charge for your services. **Be mercenary**—just as mercenary as lawyers or doctors or other professionals. That's the only way you can be a full-time professional, however you define the term. And don't be afraid of that word *mercenary*; any word that arouses such righteous indignation can't be all bad. Screw 'em, Joe Merc.

As for *soldier of fortune* . . . this term broadens your horizons, both financially and professionally. You are not locked into purely military parameters. You become an adventurer into the world of conflict, an environment as broad and ill-defined as the mind of man can conceive. But

that world is very real. It's the world of sharks and sardines, of predators and victims. Some survive and prosper, others perish. As a mercenary SOF you swim with the sharks.

SOFs divide into two broad categories. One is personified by Hilaire du Berrier, gentleman adventurer.

Du Berrier notes that SOFs of his era had a code for everything, including dress. Photos of the period show him and his crowd decked out in jodhpur trousers and boots, costly leather jackets, silk scarves, doeskin gloves. You look at those guys and you know that they died with their boots on and spit-polished.

But the prototype of the twentieth-century soldier of fortune—turned into a sort of superstar by writers Richard Harding Davis and O. Henry—was a great drunken semi-literate slob who could fight like a beast. He was General Lee Christmas. For nearly twenty years around the turn of the century he was the most powerful man in Central America.

Christmas didn't have time to wear jodhpurs. He sired forty-six children and his descendants are still scattered around Honduras. He also found time to be a general in half a dozen armies, act as contract agent for the United Fruit Company, and serve as den mother for a generation of tropical mercs that included such notables as Tracy Richardson, Sam Dreber, Guy Maloney, Dean Lamb. . . . By the time the shooting stopped, Christmas had turned Central America into United Fruit's private empire. Lee Christmas then went home to New Orleans and died quietly in bed.

How good was Christmas and his nefarious crew? Damn good. They were ideally adapted to their time and place.

Those old guys were survival types: jungle-wise as scarred panthers, tough, smart—and *intuitive*. They had an instinctive sense of timing. They knew when to get in and when it was time to leave. They could smell danger. They could sense an opponent's fear or indecision. They knew how to bluff—and they were damn lucky.

How would they have fared in the Central America of today? Or the Middle East and Southeast Asia?

They probably would have lasted about five minutes, instincts notwithstanding. Sure they had their enormous self-confidence, their charisma and survival intuition, their lethal image—but *what those guys really had going for them was the good fortune to have gotten their calling back in an era when it was no way as dangerous as it is in these last years of the twentieth century.*

Compadre, don't think for one moment that you're going to do a Lee Christmas number on our little brown brothers in the Third World. That's the mistake the conventionals make—and keep making. That era is over. The guerrillas and terrorists you're going up against win their wars. Our side doesn't.

That's the paradox. Your patrons and clients and causes will be Western oriented. They're the people under attack. They're the people who will pay for your services—and the other side not only won't retain you but also considers you a natural enemy. That narrows your parameters but also simplifies the ideology issue. The lines are already drawn and the choice of sides is not yours to make. And that,

compadre, means you're on the losing side. The mercenary's world is steadily shrinking.

So what does this mean to you, Joe Merc, in professional terms? Maybe you should just forget the whole thing?

Not necessarily. Lost causes and losers go with the job. As the old master Hilaire du Berrier notes:

The soldier of fortune is a man who chooses the warrior's life for its own sake, and, by the code, faces the fact that, if there were a chance of winning, the side for which he is fighting would not need him. . . .

Very true—and that's why I have a section in this manual devoted to losing sides. The trick is to pick the *right* losing side.

It also means a radical shift in your thinking and acting. Old-time swashbuckling is out. Your military experience is not good enough. Nor your Agency connection. They can't cope either. You're going to need a whole new doctrine to adjust to the new conflict environment. Start thinking *new* combat formations, *new* intelligence techniques, *new* tactics and technology. I'll try to point you on your way. Let me emphasize that this is *not* a military text. It's an attempt to outline what is involved in the making of a mercenary soldier of fortune.

We'll try to trace your probable route from lowly paramilitary status to field mercenary, then give you an intelligence and command capacity—which I think even Hilaire du Berrier would agree moves you out of the "human sheep" group, into the soldier of fortune category, and on to full-service independent operator status, FSIO. He's the rare guy who has mastered the techniques and

systems and Mercenary Occupational Specialties of the lower ranks and applies them in enterprises ranging from businesses to bedrooms. The same principles apply.

That's one of the curious things about this way of life. You'll find that the people in it, their wars and the outcomes of those wars, are highly predictable. One reason is that there is a large body of human experience for you to tap. Another is that people like you tend to have certain characteristics in common (like Mafiosi, veteran mercs can spot each other at a glance) and one of them is a tendency to let their profession overwhelm their personalities and their whole existence. So do guerrillas and terrorists. And they have all found that their professional techniques are readily adaptable to the whole spectrum of the human condition.

PART 1

**Welcome to the World of the
Mercenary Soldier of Fortune**

Yours is a profession people love to hate. Be aware of that right now. You'll need the sensitivity of a crocodile if you pursue this way of life. The "merc" tag is considered a real putdown in respectable circles—including governments that employ them—and *soldier of fortune* usually translates as "cheap adventurer."

But let's face it: many or most adventurers in this business can be had for pretty damn cheap. We have too many people content to go through their careers as nickel-and-dimers—a lamentable state this manual is intended to rectify.

If you're one who becomes unhinged with embarrassment at the thought of getting paid to risk your life and render skilled service to selected patrons and causes, then neither this book nor the way of life described in it are for you. You want to play Lone Ranger, fine—but please go play in somebody else's yard. This game is for real and the stakes are high. Irregular conflict, not formal conventional war, is reshaping this world. Mercenaries, in their several modes, are crucial factors in this process. That's the projection being made right now by researchers at the famed Rand Corporation.

That's another reason for this manual: to acquaint you, Joe Merc, with your own awesome potential . . . and the

new warfare systems that will soon change forever the face of war—systems ideally adapted to the irregular warrior.

Right from the beginning try to get a handle on the patterns behind the swirl of seemingly chaotic violence in this world war without end—and how you fit into its context. Those patterns exist. After a while you'll begin to see them take shape. You'll note trends. You'll be able to read small signs from which you can predict big events. This cannot be taught. But it can be learned. Constantly observe and analyze the conflict scene.

Your role in all this?

You are a substitute or reinforcement for official military and security people who are unable or unwilling or not allowed to do their job properly.

Their numbers are legion. And the fact they are confused, frightened, and inept will not endear you to them, be they Third World military or Western military and intelligence bureaucracies. Antagonism between them and the independent operator is inherent. It goes with the job. You'll have to learn to live with it . . . as they are also learning.

You have a priceless asset they both lack and covet. The very fact you are unofficial, a wild card, makes you reasonably deniable. You are nonterritorial. That translates into what is called *transnationality*. Nobody can seriously threaten to nuke your home turf; you have none.

Your embassy can't be seized or bombed. Diplomats and diplomacy count for little in your type of action. You operate outside the pale, beyond the norm. You are almost an unperson.

Not only bureaucrats are confused and irritated by their

inability to get an exact fix on you. So is the general public. Not to mention the law. Wherever and whenever mercenaries are detected working the wars, the debate begins anew: are those guys legal?

Section 1:

Working the Wars—Is It Legal?

Want to be a dashing soldier of fortune like Indiana Jones? Do you yearn to be a noble merc like those great guys on *The A-Team*?

If the answer is affirmative, chum, you've got the wrong book. This is nonfiction. But if you're for real and genuinely interested in what this way of life is all about, then there are two questions you'll want answered before we go any further.

Isn't it illegal, being a mercenary? Can't I lose my citizenship or go to jail? Assuming it's not illegal, how in hell do I actually get started as a mercenary? Where do I begin?

Let's get that first question squared away soonest. It's one you'll be hearing throughout your career. And initially, it's what most frightens novices. They fear becoming men without a country. And most outsiders tend to look on mercs as exotic criminals.

So what's the real story? Here are the facts.

Answer: it's legal, all right—as long as you observe certain parameters we'll review in depth. And the President of the United States has publicly agreed that mercenary service is legal.

EDITOR'S NOTE: All laws are subject to change and to varying interpretations by the courts depending on the facts of each case. Readers with questions about the legal ramifications of their actions are urged to consult their own attorneys before they act. A personal attorney can best advise on the application of the law to a reader's specific plans.

President Reagan was questioned on the subject in October 1984. He was asked specifically about the legality of the presence of American citizens, civilians, who are serving with the anti-Sandinistas in Central America. The President said the Americans were acting in an "honorable tradition" and that the U.S. government has no objection.

"It's quite in line with what has been pretty well-established tradition in our country," Reagan said. "Nothing was done legally about the formation of a brigade of Americans in the Spanish Civil War. In World War II, we had pilots being recruited to go to the Flying Tigers. . . ."

Issue settled? Nope. We're just getting started. A little paranoia is not only a useful trait in this business—it's vital to your survival. There are people out there, Joe Merc, who will do you in legally, given half a chance. Don't make it easy for them. The fact is . . . the terms *mercenary* and *soldier of fortune* are no better defined legally than they are semantically. There are no precise guidelines. This is both good and bad. On the one hand, these blurred definitions can be dangerous. On the other, the fact that outsiders really don't have a handle on this way of life is your best protection—and, as we'll see, enormously enhances your market value.

The official protective institutions, the conventional military and law-enforcement bodies, are being overtaken by violent forces and events which they understand but poorly. Those institutions are increasingly aware of their inability to cope effectively with this new conflict environment. So are governments as a whole and the private sector. They are turning increasingly to quarters better adapted to this new and dangerous world. And official U.S.

resistance to paramilitaries, once fierce and bitter, is now notably lessening. The official climate regarding paramilitaries is steadily warming—although the role of Western paramilitaries is still only dimly understood. Even so, despite the warming trend, this twilight-zone environment is the merc's best protection against both sides.

Only the Marxists know what the role of the irregular is all about. They've been employing their so-called "internationalists" for decades.

American "Volunteers" in Nicaragua

Howard Hughes's old suite at the former Intercontinental Hotel in Managua has new tenants these days: it serves as office and living quarters for favored members of the American contingent of Nicaragua's *internacionalistas*.

It's a concept dating back to the International Brigades of the Spanish Civil War. Like the old brigades, the modern version consists of ideological mercenaries from around the world. American *internacionalistas* number about two hundred, making them the world's largest single contingent of American mercs. Something to think about.

But does the term *mercenary* really apply here? Not to the *internacionalistas* it doesn't. Their term is *volunteer*, plus jargon nomenclature such as *Solidaristas* and *friends of the revolution*. (Remember that word *volunteer*, incidentally; it's much more socially acceptable than *merc*. In verbal encounters with outsiders, always refer to yourself as a volunteer.) And money, of course, is not their motivation. They are political activists. So let us take them at their word: they can't be considered mercs. At least I hope not.

Very aggressively anti-American are these Americans.

Some are employed by the Foreign Ministry and the controlled media, and much of the virulent anti-U.S. propaganda coming out of Nicaragua these days is written, translated, and voiced by American *internacionalistas*. They lustily sing the new Nicaraguan anthem, which refers to the U.S. as “the enemy of mankind”—and loudly proclaim readiness to repel any U.S. invasion.

Which they would. Their dedication is obvious. And the *internacionalistas* serve full- or part-time in armed and uniformed Sandinista military units. By any legal definition these people, American citizens, are in the service of an unfriendly foreign power.

Even so, the American Sandinistas find that the land which is “the enemy of mankind” looks pretty good after a while in terms of living standards. Nicaragua’s population of revolutionaries is vastly exceeded by the massed volume of hyperactive amoebas and mosquitoes—and our red-hot gringo Sandinistas eventually find reasons for serving the cause better back in the jungles of Manhattan or San Francisco. And back they come.

No problem. They won’t be prosecuted and they know it. These people have excellent legal counsel. They know the legal parameters. They know that mercenary or volunteer service abroad, uniformed and armed, is *not illegal*—contrary to the ancient myth.

That applies even more to you, compadre. As a true or classic mercenary, you’re not going to be serving a foreign state with which the U.S. is virtually in a state of clandestine war. Follow a few simple rules and you’ll be in even less danger from the Federals than your internacionalista opposite numbers.

You’re legally protected by a wealth of legal precedent, tradition, common law and practice. It’s pure myth that the State Department has any jurisdiction over your citizenship—nor does it have any real legal power over Americans abroad.

Over the years, U.S. diplomats have perpetuated that bit of fiction. By implication and innuendo they may even now threaten you with loss of citizenship. So let’s see how this has worked in actual practice.

Service to “Foreign Princes”

Cuba’s two years of internationalized civil war ended in January 1959. Fidel Castro’s guerrillas came boiling out of the hills and took over all Cuba. With them were hundreds of foreign volunteers, mainly North Americans. Ironically Americans made possible Castro’s rise to power and the quick communization of Cuba.

But what concerns us here is this statement issued by the U.S. Embassy in Havana on 9 January 1959:

As a service to persons who may be interested, the American Consul General in Havana calls attention of any United States citizens who may be members of the Cuban revolutionary forces to Section 349-a3 of the United States Immigration and Nationality Act. Such persons who continue voluntarily to serve with those forces, *if or when they become an integral part of the armed forces of the Republic of Cuba*, are liable to expatriation under the provision cited. [Italics added.]

Note that phrase *if or when*. . . . The State Department carefully *excluded* service with rebels as legal cause

for loss of citizenship. Until then the issue had been deliberately left ambiguous. What the statement comes down to is the first State Department admission in writing that there is no law against Americans serving in unofficial or rebel military organizations outside the U.S.

Nor has any American in history ever been "expatriated" for such service—nor for service in the integral armed forces of any country either!

That's right. Despite the myth, not once in American history has a case even been presented to a U.S. court by the U.S. government in which it was petitioned that a native-born American be stripped of his citizenship on the grounds that he had served "in the armed forces of a foreign state."

This judicial precedent is clear cut: you may serve a "foreign prince," government, or irregular army without loss of citizenship—if you're a native-born U.S. citizen.

That was also the case following the 1959 State Department statement. Most Americans in Castro's army ignored the ultimatum. They continued to serve in the rebel army long after it had become "the armed forces of the Republic of Cuba." They then left, many of them, to serve with anti-Castro rebels fighting those same armed forces.

Nobody paid the slightest attention to the January 1959 expatriation threat—including the State Department. All hands knew the threat had no substance. The State Department has no jurisdiction over citizenship.

But you can be hassled by such provisions as Title 18 Chapter 45 (Foreign Relations) of the United States Code. It states:

Whoever, within the United States, . . . hires or retains another to enlist . . . in the service of a foreign . . . state . . . as a soldier . . . shall be fined not more than \$1,000 or imprisoned more than three years or both.

This, of course, refers only to recruiting—and only to recruiting *within the United States*. It's certainly clear enough. Even so—as we'll see—it's violated constantly but without prosecution.

Swearing a formal oath of allegiance to "a foreign prince" is also technically against the law. It, too, has never been enforced even though the law seems quite specific on that point.

Actually, of course, you can go your whole career and never be asked to take an oath. None of my "foreign princes" ever required an oath; they depended on more realistic assurances of loyalty.

However, many U.S. citizens do take such oaths. Thousands of Americans have served or are serving in the "integral" armed forces of foreign states. Nobody pays the slightest attention—again establishing a comfortable precedent.

Furthermore, it's a little-known fact that you may be a U.S. citizen and legally hold citizenship in another country. In other words, dual citizenship. This is *not* true for naturalized U.S. citizens—in fact, naturalized Americans are also vulnerable on other points—and the law makes a careful distinction here.

The Oath of Allegiance to the United States requires new citizens to "renounce and abjure all allegiance" to any

foreign state. The loyalty oath has legal teeth and precedent.

For American-born citizens, however, it's a different story. *If you are born in this country you are and remain a citizen—unless you yourself choose to renounce that citizenship.* As for dual citizenship, it is legally permitted by the absence of legislation preventing that status—and it's much more common than is generally realized.

Many thousands of American-born Irish and Jews—to take two examples—hold citizenship in the Republic of Ireland or Israel; they are also U.S. citizens. They can and do vote in Irish and Israeli elections, hold Israeli and Irish passports, swear oaths and serve in those countries' armed forces—and do the same in the United States. It's all legal and the same is true of other nationalities.

This does not mean, of course, that you cannot be prosecuted for criminal acts while in foreign service. You commit a crime abroad, merc or not, and you can be treated like any other criminal. Even so, there are mercenary types around who literally get away with murder.

This brings up a touchy point, one that you'll encounter over and over again. And it's an old one.

Your predecessors of a thousand years ago were not attracted to the profession because of the retirement benefits. Nor are they today. What the old boys wanted was a "license to loot." They were less interested in the 007-type "license to kill." The proper sequence of events for an ancient mercenary was not kill-burn-rape-pillage. The pros preferred to reverse the sequence, when possible, and let the other dum-dums discover that one should pillage be-

fore one burns. The smart ones pillaged and brought the loot home to the wife and kids.

What it comes down to today is that the basic pay scale for mercenaries is relatively not much higher than it was a thousand years ago—but the fringe benefits can be incredible. One of them could well be called a "license to loot." However, the proper term nowadays is "selective law enforcement." It's institutionalized and protected lawbreaking. That's how it works when your powerful patron approves your labors.

When your patron is in a less happy mood he can suddenly invoke the law and wipe you out—another traditional feature of employer-employee relations in this field. Happens all the time. And not only with the mercenary help. Assurances of protection by selective law enforcement can also be a straight setup, a trap. Most mercenaries run afoul of selective law enforcement when they lose control and practice wretched excess. They become an embarrassment. Other times, mercenaries are eliminated by this route simply because they no longer fit into their patron's new agenda. Don't let it happen to you. Restrain yourself. Refuse to play this game.

There's a wealth of legal precedent and tradition out there to protect you as long as you operate in a strictly mercenary capacity. But if you go one step beyond, if you assume you have some sort of lawbreaking license, you're putting your head on the chopping block.

Now the Bad News

Not bad exactly . . . just an opposing point of view. You'll want a second opinion. You'll want to take a careful

look at what you'll be meeting in terms of a *hostile* interpretation of mercs vis-à-vis U.S. law. And that is not lacking. There are those people who are infuriated by the very concept of mercenaries.

And there are many others roused to fury when mercs are employed against Marxist regimes. That is what happened during the fall and winter of 1984. A political furor arose following the deaths of two Americans in service against the Nicaraguan Sandinistas and their *internacionalista* allies. It became a full-blown media offensive.

What was absent was any reference to the fact that at least two American *internacionalistas* had been killed the year before fighting for the Sandinista-backed guerrillas in El Salvador. Nor has there ever been any public mention of this striking fact: *More than a third of the Sandinista rebel troops in the final campaign against the Somoza regime in Nicaragua in 1979 were internacionalistas, including Americans.* As they did in 1959 for Fidel Castro in Cuba, American volunteers played a key role in bringing the Sandinista regime to power in 1979. Heard any complaints about that? You heard not a peep.

But in September 1984, powerful segments of the media suddenly realized that the Sandinista *internacionalistas* no longer had a monopoly on the services of private U.S. citizens. American volunteers were also serving with the anti-Sandinistas! Reaction was predictable.

A *New York Times* columnist ignored the far larger contingent of *internacionalistas* but got very excited at the presence of American volunteers serving with the Contras. Think of the implications, he shuddered. The age of the rent-a-guerrilla is upon us, wailed another journalist—and

went on to state that the presence of American irregulars in foreign wars shattered all precedent. The Russians did that kind of thing; Americans didn't. The fact is, of course, that Americans have been free-lancing foreign conflicts only for about as long as there have been Americans.

Emotion and ignorance—that's the standard reaction to irregulars, whatever their specific label. And it's not confined to the press. Non-Marxist volunteers in foreign wars are "whores of war" in the Marxist propaganda lexicon. And oddly enough I heard the same term used by a famous retired U.S. Army major general in reference to all such nonregular types in current conflicts. The regular military can be verbally hostile as hell even to terminology like *guerrilla*, *military elite*, *commando*, and *special operations*. And it's not mere semantics. That attitude translates into policy.

Two other buzz words that draw even more flak are, of course, *mercenary* and *soldier of fortune*. The "hired gun" image is one factor, however dwindling. Even so, plenty of people will still treat you like an AIDS victim. Main reason now that you upset people is political. Liberals really do see you as a threat to peace.

Charles Maechling, Jr., of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington is one such thoughtful observer of this scene. Maechling makes the argument that mercenaries are going to drag us all into war. He wants the current neutrality laws strongly amended to cope with what he calls "a political problem of massive proportions."

Writing in the *Miami Herald* of 23 September 1984, Maechling acknowledges the historic context of Americans in foreign wars. There has scarcely been a war or revolu-

tion in Europe or Asia or Latin America for the last two hundred years that has not drawn American volunteers. Some have been mercenaries, says Maechling, and others idealists, "but the net effect has been the same—to embroil the country itself in foreign quarrels."

Note carefully that last phrase. The only "foreign quarrels" in which American volunteers have "embroiled" the country have been quarrels in which the U.S. government *wanted* to be embroiled—notably World War II with the Flying Tigers in the Far East and the Eagle Squadron in the Battle of Britain. Their presence did *not* lead to war—although U.S. support for both forces was transparent—and *never* in American history have American private citizens dragged the U.S. into a war, unwanted or otherwise.

Nevertheless, this is an extremely sensitive issue—and justly so. If you want to go out and get your ass shot off, that's your business, says Uncle Sam in effect, *but if you involve the country*, well . . . that's the point we bury you behind bars for a decade or two—even if we have to invent new laws. And you'd better believe that Uncle will have popular support behind him!

Remember, too, there are agents and pressure groups right now working furiously to involve the U.S. in their wars. That's been true down through history. *Stay away from those people and never lend yourself to any such effort.* The burden of that is on you. You can operate as a mercenary quite legally—but that legality is tenuous and don't you forget it. People like Charles Maechling won't.

Meanwhile, rejoice in the fact that, as a frustrated Mr. Maechling puts it:

U. S. neutrality laws read a lot tougher than they are, at least where individuals are concerned. One section of the criminal code seems to prohibit individuals from leaving the United States to enlist in the forces of a foreign force engaged in hostilities against a friendly nation. Two other sections prohibit conspiracy within the United States. But all four have been watered down by an 1896 Supreme Court decision requiring that these be proved by some positive act committed *within* the territory of the United States. As Senator Barry Goldwater recently pointed out, there are no obstacles, legal or otherwise, to prevent Americans from leaving the country to risk their necks anywhere on earth.

Perhaps I should also mention that Charles Maechling ~~is~~ also an international lawyer and former State Department official. Thank you, Mr. Maechling. Now let's recap.

The Verdict: "Nothing Criminal"

What it comes down to, compadre, and what so frustrates people like Mr. Maechling, is this: What you do in someone else's country is your business—and that of the country you're in.

If you run around the States recruiting people for an armed invasion of another country, you are obviously asking for trouble. However, there are those who argue that even raising an army in the U.S. to fight free-lance in foreign wars is *not* illegal—but even I would consider that an extremely lax interpretation of the neutrality laws.

However, just for the record—and so you can point it out should the occasion arise—a former distinguished at-

torney general of the United States publicly stated, while in office, his opinion that recruiting in the U.S. for mercenary service abroad is *not* illegal. The late Robert F. Kennedy's endorsement of merc legality went far beyond that of President Reagan.

"Clearly, they were not designed for the kind of situation which exists in the world today," Mr. Kennedy said of the neutrality laws. "Nor is an individual prohibited from departing from the United States, with others of like belief, to join still others in a second country for an expedition against a third country. There is nothing criminal in an individual leaving the United States with the intent of joining an insurgent group. There is nothing criminal in his urging others to do so."

Still with me? If you are, good buddy, you're going to have to make a decision. Namely, if you want to make like one of those great guys on *The A-Team*—minus the BS, of course—there is nobody stopping you but yourself.

If you want to stick to video action, that's your business. If you want the real thing, you've got about forty wars from which to choose. There are people out there on your side who need all the help they can get. So we get to that second big question: How do you get started in this business?

In a way, that's a dumb question. You want to work the wars, you go to the wars. As in the old days, you want to see action, you "ride to the sound of the guns." Not to worry. We're not about to thrust you onto a battlefield—and, in fact, battlefields are too old fashioned for our wars.

Where we'll start is on the periphery of Third World wars. Repeat, periphery, meaning a spot where you can get

your feet wet without diving in. You're not yet ready for combat, ex-regular or not. Time enough for that later.

But if you're tired of *Captain Kangaroo* and are ready to take that first, long step into the mercenary way, then here's where we begin.

Section 2:

Entry Routes to the Mercenary Way

Approach with caution. Job-hunt the wrong way and you're dead. You may suddenly find yourself in a lethal situation you're not equipped to handle. Never close your eyes and plunge blindly into overseas mercenary employment.

There are those who do, of course, and that accounts for our large personnel turnover.

Heed the Dean Lamb job-hunting system. Lamb was the great pilot and machine gunner who worked fifteen wars during the same classic SOF period as Du Berrier. Colonel Lamb accounted for his employment record this way: "A war or revolution breaks out. I happen to be there. Why am I on hand? Well, you knock around the world and something usually turns up."

The old colonel was speaking with semiforked tongue, as we shall see. But that last sentence is very true. Knock around the world looking for trouble and you'll find it. No problem. Something will *always* turn up.

But look at those other two sentences: "A war or revolution breaks out. I happen to be there."

Happened, hell! Lamb is snowing the troops. Review his career and you'll see that Dean Lamb spent precious little time in Winnipeg or Copenhagen. Lamb went to the world's trouble spots. He went to where the wars were—or were about to be—and sometimes he even helped them “break out.”

But *always*, Lamb was a toe-dunker—not a blind diver into someone else's pool. He was cautious—which perhaps he felt didn't enhance his carefully created macho image. In any event, Lamb entered his operational areas as a lone operative. Then he carefully reconned around until *he* decided to join the festivities. Never did he surrender control of his own movements and actions. Never did he fully trust anyone.

And Colonel Dean Lamb lived to be one of our oldest and most successful SOFs.

You see my point. Don't rush into this thing blindly. You need experience, all right—but ooze gently into the trade. Dip your toe. No blind diving. *But you do indeed have to go where the action is—or soon will be.* And that isn't Winnipeg or Copenhagen.

Which means you'll be making a transit. It comes down to that.

Homework

But don't dash off to the Cambodian border or the Rio Coco or Kinshasa just yet either. You have homework to do, literally. Before you go anywhere, Joe, start reading—and never quite stop.

Professionals in this business are a highly literate crew. They read voraciously. They read not only within their

mercenary occupational specialty, but about *almost every topic involving conflict*. They are just naturally drawn to *this* broad subject—but they also learn, remember, and are quick to pick up new ideas they find in fiction as well as nonfiction.

One pro tradition you'd do well to emulate: Between assignments or awaiting missions—or even just visiting a strange city—they head for the nearest library, take out a card, and start studying. They read everything pertinent to their new job and operational area. And, unlike the vast majority of our solid citizens, they know how to use a library to the fullest. The CIA even has a training course for its paramilitaries in how to work the Library of Congress. Tap a good library and you can find everything you ever wanted to know about the sex life of the Khmer Rouge—or how to manufacture explosives out of cow manure.

You'll also want to keep constantly current. Learn to read, view, and listen with discrimination. Be able to fix upon what is important to you. You won't have time to absorb all the information available. You'll have to learn to target your information sources.

Television is, of course, important. You watch television not only for its information content but also in awareness that this medium is what the world most strongly reacts to. TV not only reports trends and developments; it also creates them. As a rule of thumb, if you and/or your client become the focus of TV attention, you're in trouble.

As for American print media, you can get hold of four key newspapers in most major libraries. They are: *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, and

the Miami *Herald*. These four are the newspapers particularly scanned by foreign governments and their U.S. agents.

In the soldier of fortune and general military field, your best bet is still *Soldier of Fortune* itself, followed by *Gung Ho*. The latter is particularly good for its coverage of the military elite and special operations. A host of copycat publications followed in the wake of *Soldier of Fortune*'s success. Then came a flood of newsletters. A whole new industry was spawned.

The better publications are excellent—within their limitations. Their readers want to be entertained as well as informed, which is to be expected. You'll get good action stories and photos. The weapons coverage is even better. You'll get a good feel for the operational areas and their people. What you will not get—and you shouldn't expect it—is in-depth, all-points intelligence. The paramilitary pubs are only a small facet of your intelligence composite.

These publications face much the same problem you'll encounter: access. Access to operational areas, access to local cooperation, facilities, and services, access to inside information. They try particularly for on-the-spot coverage of four key operational areas: Central America, Afghanistan, Angola-Mozambique, Southeast Asia—which means they need the blessings of a host of officials and institutions; in-depth access to those operational areas is largely dependent on the goodwill of a bureaucratic array stretching from Washington into the field—meaning the State Department, Central Intelligence Agency, the Department of Defense, and various appendages thereof.

And in the field, the operational areas, correspondents

must pass inspection by the local U.S. embassy, the Agency station people, the Military Group—not to mention the local officials, military surrogates, and so on. But don't worry too much about the latter group. It's Big Uncle's boys who are the real turnkeys. It is U.S. officialdom that giveth and U.S. officialdom that taketh away. The aid program pipelining goodies to U.S.-sponsored guerrillas or regular forces can be turned on and off like a faucet—or reduced to a dribble to keep the locals in line. Very effective. The same routine also works with the paramilitary press. They want access, they cooperate.

The result: What you get from the soldier of fortune pubs is a sanitized version of what's happening out there. You get narrowly focused up-front action that ignores larger ambiguities and unpleasanties. If you ever read a timid suggestion that perhaps all these in-country bureaucrats know zilch about running a Third World war—then that correspondent is not long either for that country or the publication. You won't read about the seemingly endless and mindless problems of transferring U.S. "advice" and assistance to the local clients . . . how, for instance, those U.S. officials for a period dumped tons of female sanitary napkins on the Nicaraguan contras—at the same time that those U.S.-sponsored guerrillas lacked adequate footwear—and still do.

But by no means is discreet self-censorship confined to the paramilitaries. You'll find that media objectivity goes out the window in coverage of Third World wars. The worst offenders, in fact, are not the paramilitaries; it's those four major newspapers I recommended you read and the major TV networks. They gain access by sheer throw-

weight. In all of them, you must learn to read and watch for what they don't report as well as what they do.

But take a look at several of the regular military publications and you'll note a strange fact: they are becoming more freewheeling and venturesome than most of the privately owned pubs in the soldier of fortune field. Take *Military Review*, now under the vigorous stewardship of a new managing editor, Major Thomas A. Conrad. He doesn't hesitate to print boldly controversial articles regarding the Army's role in a world aflame with low-intensity conflict. *The Marine Corps Gazette* has also been in the forefront in urging a military doctrine based on maneuver and speed instead of mass. And the unofficial publication *Armed Forces Journal* is the third of its type you should add to your list—primarily because *AFJ*'s editor, Benjamin Schemmer, is as knowledgeable about unconventional conflict and special operations as anybody in Washington.

In the newsletter field there are only two worth your time and money. One is *Covert Intell Letter*. The other is *HduB Reports*, published by the old gentleman adventurer himself. Du Berrier offers a world view of inside events from the perspective of European intelligence. The reports are strong on global clandestine conflict, particularly terrorism, and the secret manipulative process that constitutes Third World warfare. Du Berrier obviously has easy access to friendly European intelligence services—which is not surprising, since he was twice decorated by French intelligence. However, unlike a host of similar publications, du Berrier's *Reports* is no mere conduit for official leaks. H du B relentlessly seeks out the flaws, weaknesses, mistakes, and plain damn foolishness inherent in conflict—

and skewers the guilty with ideological impartiality. He also has his own network of contacts built up over the decades.

Du Berrier's headquarters is at 20, Boulevard, Princesse Charlotte, Monte Carlo, Monaco. His U.S. editor is Leda P. Rutherford at P.O. Box 786, St. George, Utah 84770.

However, I do flatly endorse one classified ad you'll find in the SOF pubs. That's the one for *Covert Intell Letter*, Horizone, Box 67, St. Charles, Missouri 63302. The publisher has always dealt fairly with me—which is actually rather unusual in this trade—and his little newsletter is particularly useful in keeping track of the CIA's constantly changing guidelines and moods.

The publisher, a bearded presence known only as "Walt," tends to be schizophrenic about his Agency association. He's still a true believer in the august folk who dwell in the halls of Langley—and in fact never once mentions the sacred three initials C-I-A—but he's also an old pro who recognizes bullshit even when it emanates from Langley, Virginia. It's not often in the SOF trade press that you'll find anybody denouncing the "throwaway attitude" of U.S. intelligence agencies regarding "expendable" contract people.

The newspapers may mention that some Americans disappeared overseas but they will be described as adventurers, drifters, and undesirables with *no* government connections. . . . The United States has always felt that covert ops is a dirty business and that if we did it, we shouldn't be associated with it. . . . This is bullshit!

On a strictly practical level, if Walt tells you that the hit contract put out years ago on Carlos the Jackal, the famed terrorist, has been canceled, you know there's no point in trying to do in Fat Charles. Not only will you not be paid for it—this is unsaid but the message is clear—but the Agency will be most upset if someone does blow him away. You know that another of those nasty little deals has been made.

On a more basic level, novices find Walt's little publication useful for pointing out developing mercenary market trends. Sample:

Potential merc opportunities cont: In the future, efficient American merc groups may find employment providing security and counterterrorist strike forces for offshore oil, supertankers, containerships, and other critical facilities. (Recently) an environmentalist hit group plotted an attack on whaling ships (Soviet and Japanese) in Chilean waters. The equipment sophistication was mind boggling. . . . Only merc groups with well-developed skills in communication, contracts, and selling would have a chance to develop this antiterrorist market. We will publish potential customer addresses. . . .

One thing you should appreciate about Walt—as I do—is that he keeps the usual merco-macho-horseshit factor under control. Unlike so many practitioners—the official Freddies as well as the unofficials and wild cards—he takes care not to become a caricature. He's no comic-book character. He has no illusions about the trade and the tradesmen.

I asked him for a comment for this manual. Did he have any message for novices? He did.

All too often, the merc is a desperate man who has blown his options and loves the fever pitch and wild excitement of irregular warfare. He wants to reach financial status and security in one bold stroke.

That's a quick route to the grave.

For others, it may be quite different. If they survive that initial shock, they may secure rich and powerful patrons. They then experience periods of great personal power, a sense of accomplishment, even riches.

And the approach to the profession is the same as to any other demanding and highly skilled discipline: master the basics, then expand to the more advanced techniques. Steady training and concentration are a constant. The professional has always to fine-tune himself to cope with what Clausewitz calls "the province of danger, physical suffering and death."

Walt is right. As in any other business, you master the basics before you can aspire to higher status. You must have something to offer your employer. You'll probably begin as more or less a generalist, develop a specialty, then, at the peak of your career, you'll once again become a generalist: a full-service independent operator.

Your first years, however, will probably follow the trajectory of your initial entry into the profession. There are several routes.

Entry Level Route 1: Mercenary Schools

We'll lead off with this one because it's the most obvious: you wanta be a merc, you go to merc school. Right? Well, maybe.

There are a lot of pluses and minuses to this route, Joe. I'm not endorsing it, hear, but that's partly for personal reasons. Anyway, you're entitled to know. There are mercenary schools around, and more coming, which are turning out people who right now are out in the boonies with Third World warriors.

This is a new development. Frankly, *I have yet to meet a genuine mercenary who is the product of a mercenary school.* Yet . . . some of these new schools offer excellent training—within the tight limitations of their week or two-week cycle—the school directors have good connections . . . and some of their grads are painlessly inserted into overseas conflict areas—but not for actual conflict. They don't have to worry about Uncle nor are you very likely to end up KIA. Your overseas tour of duty may last no more than a week or two and you probably won't even get close to the enemy—but you can come back and call yourself a "merc." But quietly.

What these schools have going for them above all is *connections. Personal contact is what it's all about in working the wars*—and you *will* make contact, for better or worse, at several of the better schools. But be aware of this: Your contacts at these camps all point in one direction—you'll find yourself not an independent operator but rather, very *indirectly*, subject to the whims of the Central Intelligence Agency. And it can be a very whimsical institution. . . .

That's the way it is, Joe Merc. The Agency, whether you work for it directly or not, is a constant factor in your career.

I'm not going to name these schools. The major ones are already fairly well known; if you can't find them on your own you're in the wrong field. They are not to be confused with "survivalist" training nor the vigilante-type groups in California and elsewhere. There are also, to be sure, fly-by-night merc training schools and a few rip-off artists. It will be up to you to target what you're looking for—and if you've guessed wrong you may have blown as much as a thousand dollars.

If you're on target, consider your training period to be almost as much a *test* as it is schooling. *You'll be watched.* You'll be constantly observed by your trainers. Your fellow trainees, some of whom have already made their connection, will also have their eye on you. Be aware that much of the training focus seems to center on endurance and how you handle strain. You'll be watched for your ability to make quick, sound decisions under stress.

At the same time, Joe, you're supposed to show you are responsive to manipulation. No cowboys wanted, no rebels. You'll be expected to think for yourself—but within limits. You're supposed to keep your mouth shut and obey orders.

What we're talking about here, of course, is a sort of covert ops prep school and screening process for paramilitaries. By no means are these schools Agency fronts or under its direct control—but the connection is sometimes there. Overall surveillance always is.

You'll meet many a paramilitary semiprofessional at

these schools. They take them as *refresher* courses. One thing you should be aware of from the beginning is that it's either feast or famine in this business; months, even years, will pass between contracts—although I suspect that this is as much from choice as necessity. A lot of these people are into a peculiar life-style in which a normal middle-American existence is punctuated by brief bursts of overseas assignments. Only a minority of our so-called mercs actually support themselves exclusively in this field.

For the part-timers, then, as for the novices, the concentrated training at the better schools pays off in honed skills and contacts. It's your chance to be tapped for what might be called honorary membership in the very real "old-boy network" of former members of elite military units.

The training period itself is too short to give you the in-depth conditioning you need for this kind of work. Even so, it may well be worth the price of admission. Any training program that stresses night ops, as do the best of them, can't be all bad. The training is also so miserably uncomfortable and exhausting that grads babble enthusiastically about it for months after—and often go back for seconds. To each his own. . . .

To give you an idea what it's like, here's the experience of an advanced student and combat vet who recently attended a notorious "mercenary training center" in Alabama.

They pick you up at the airport and transport you to the boondocks. There you load up with web equipment, canteens, packs, knives, shovels, weapons both foreign and domestic. You also get climbing ropes, training de-

molitions, ammo, and a whole lot of other shit. Start walking, buddy! The sun is going down and after a while you climb up a hill where a bunch of wet, dirty people with camo on their faces are setting up a perimeter of hooches in the brush, thorns, poison ivy, centipedes, and snakes. All you need is a shelter half, blanket, and for God's sake bring a ground cloth. Set up your hooch in the dark and . . . time for patrols to go out! The first recon goes out and thirty minutes later you get your chance to walk into an ambush at some frigging creek bed! Sound familiar? At about one A.M. half of you should be technically dead. Get back up on the hill and it's guard time. One half sleeps while the other half guards the perimeter. Out in the bush is an "A" team with CS paralyzer gas to shoot in your face when you get careless. It is cold, wet, and the bastards are sneaking around in the brush. A good dose of gas in the face is something to remember. It'll stop your clock. By six A.M., after about two hours of sleep, somebody kicks you in the ass and says, "Better get some coffee; we're moving out in twenty minutes." Roll it all up, put it on your back, and get vague directions to the next base camp. You have been there nine hours and you say, What can I learn in a week? A lot—especially if you don't sleep. After all, there are 168 hours in a week. Set up another perimeter, one for each of three teams, and begin weapons teardown and cleaning. Russky AK-47's, SKS carbines, Tokarevs, Brit Sterling 9-mm SMG, M-16's, Italian Carcanos, Israeli Uzis, demolitions, grenades, booby traps, and also rappeling and stretcher races while a sniper with a scope pellet gun (six hundred

feet-per-second muzzle velocity) whacks at you. Try not to get hit on bare skin. It can go two and a half inches into muscle. Lots of small unit fire and maneuver (empty weapons) through all types of terrain. Compass, no maps, classes and training all day and the ops at night. Typical comment: "If we could get six hours of sleep a night this would be fun." Forget it! Even the Commie terror school camp thirty-five clicks NW of Pyongyang, North Korea, gives you six hours of sack/night. After about two days/nights they tell you what you are doing wrong—then it gets serious—now you get CS gas too. Put out booby traps every night. Night ambushes, simulated claymore mines. Snipers get you when you go for water. All this leads up to the "all-night recon and ambush." Four thousand four hundred meter triangular compass course—train all day and patrol all night through the swamp, creek beds, thorn bushes, poison ivy, animal holes, and forty-five-degree rock-strewn slopes. "Be stealthy, you noisy bastards!" as you fall ass over teakettle down the slope in the dark. You come in at sunrise, debrief until noon, and load up and carry out all the shit the way you brought it in. Motel and beer at two P.M.—sleep, after you pull off your filthy, torn camo fatigues and scrub down in the shower watching for ticks and other parasites. You are now about ten pounds lighter than you were.

That sort of thing is excellent training—despite its brevity. *Intensity* is more important than duration. And, as we will see, it is sudden bursts of intensity that will characterize your mercenary career.

Entry Level Route 2: Scam Journalism

A curious thing has been happening in recent years out in operational areas where traditional SOFs like Dean Lamb once had their wars pretty much to themselves. A new breed has been descending on the world's battlefields—particularly the fringes.

It's the invasion of the war freaks—that and a motley element we'll call the *new paramilitaries*. The hordes now include newsmen and pseudojournalists, backpacking kids, church groups, pot dealers, CIA officers and agents, pseudo-CIA officers and agents, Peace Corpsmen, gunrunners, U.S. congressmen, carpetbagging investors, volunteer agencies, combat volunteers, insurance salesmen, novelists, hookers, antique collectors, religious zealots, students, international crooks, and plain, old-fashioned adventurers.

The invasion of the war freaks and assorted new paramilitaries was inevitable, of course. Governments and official armies have lost their monopoly on waging warfare. More than that, they have lost any trust their countrymen once had that the government and military are competent to deal with the world's wars. Now they're coming to see for themselves. And they do more than look; increasingly, the war freaks *participate*. The new paramilitaries are growing into a force to reckon with.

And from their ranks is emerging, for better or worse, a seasoned corps of soldiers of fortune.

New paramilitaries as well as war freaks are particularly drawn to Central America. The area lends itself to mercenary toe-dipping. You might cautiously check it out.

One reason is proximity. For the price of a vacation in the Canadian Maritimes, you could recon the Central

American operational environment. Central America is also inexpensive, compact, and always has paramilitary action in some form. Here you'll find a tight, visible package of the merc scene.

It's also a great place to make contacts and let other people's experience rub off. And Central America has been classic mercenary country since the mid-nineteenth century era of William Walker.

What you'll find is a scurvy crew of paramilitary misfits working the local scene in their multiple capacities. Some reporters call them "the ilk of anarchy," referring to the influx of foreign camp followers: would-be soldiers of fortune, pseudo-soldiers of fortune, a few genuine SOFs, mercenaries both official and free-lance, crazed adventurers, gunrunners, hustlers of various specialties—including dope—plus a swarm of oddballs who have come to be known as scam journalists.

One of the veterans of this scene, a self-proclaimed "scam journalist par excellence," was Nick Blake, who chronicled the misadventures of his bizarre colleagues. Blake noted the advantages of working the Central American conflicts. The cost of living is low and a free-lancer can profitably learn to play the foreign-exchange game. Press passes are also easy to come by. No matter what obscure house organ or tiny weekly from which you extract some sort of credentials, your journalistic claims will generally be honored by the locals. Both sides, all sides, are playing to the journalistic galleries.

But don't come without credentials. All hands, down in those parts as in all conflict areas, are going to note your presence. Newcomers are quickly spotted and questions

immediately arise. Who is this guy? And no matter what you've listed as your reason for visiting the country, the locals will want a tighter determination. Linger long enough and you'll be scooped up and asked what a nice guy like you is doing in a place like this. Better have a good documented answer ready. Strangers make them nervous. You don't want to make them nervous. And press credentials, however flimsy, may in many cases be better than a diplomatic passport.

But not always. These conflicts are too unstructured for any guarantees. What it comes down to is that scam journalism does provide excellent access, experience, and contacts. You can tiptoe through disasterland much more safely than if you claimed to be a "tourist" or even "businessman." But keep up front that *both* sides are dangerous in any low-intensity conflict. Both sides.

Nick Blake himself is the ultimate example. In April 1985 our scam journalist emeritus attempted a transit from Guatemala's army country to guerrilla country. He didn't make it. Nick's not been seen since. There's an ongoing argument regarding which side did him in. We'll probably never know. Making that kind of transit is like entering a free-fire zone.

Nick Blake may have been lured into his last adventure. That brings up another factor: the guerrillas and the military are not your only hazards. Your fellow freakos are also dangerous. The "ilk of anarchy" have learned to value those press passes and their bearers. Many a scam journalist has been himself scammed by operators with their own agenda—or that of the various factions and agencies involved in these conflicts.

That “ilk of anarchy” label is something of a misnomer. *A lot of those guys are secretly affiliated.* You may have caught a glimpse of this sort of thing in the recent movie *Under Fire*. As per the film, you’ll find plenty of people in these wars, locals and foreigners alike, eager to involve you in what amounts to paramilitary operations. What they will ask you, in effect, is to choose sides. It may come as a False Flags gambit. Or it may be an appeal to your idealism. And the profit motive is always operative. No matter. If you do get involved, why or how you got involved is no longer of interest; you play the paramilitary game and you’re in the game all the way.

Maybe that’s what you want. Okay—but be sure it’s your own decision and be fully aware that maximum penalty rules apply. *That is as it should be.* After all, most of the participants in these miniwars are themselves paramilitaries—and if you align yourself with them you forfeit any immunity.

Entry Level Route 3: Basic Logistics

In many, perhaps most, Third World armies the local high command’s concept of a fighting soldier is that of a tough-looking uniformed hombre sitting in a personnel carrier clutching a shiny new assault rifle . . . and never mind that the soldier doesn’t know basic firing techniques and the barrel is corroded and the soldier’s idea of field-stripping his piece is to bash it against a tree. The generals also try to ignore the fact that the personnel carrier is usually down for lack of maintenance, spare parts, and mechanics.

Our U.S. military assistance administrators have a dif-

ferent ideal: same soldier, same rifle—but now he’s sitting in a shiny new helicopter . . . and never mind that the helicopter is usually down for lack of maintenance, spare parts, and mechanics.

Take another look, compadre, and you’ll see something else: your possible entry into the merc trade. You show up at army headquarters in a country under fire—El Salvador, say—and offer to help remedy any of the above deficiencies (and they are only the most glaringly obvious) and you can be pretty sure you’ll be welcomed aboard.*

You’ll fill a void existing wherever U.S. military programs are put in place. The Pentagon insists on foisting late-twentieth-century military hardware on early-nineteenth-century armies. The transplant never works. Washington also shifts frequently to the other extreme and supplies defective military junk. There’s seldom a middle ground.

The result in both cases is a logistic nightmare. Basic infrastructure is absurdly neglected. Too many officers of the U.S. military missions prefer to “advise” and command rather than instruct in the basics. Mission personnel are also handicapped by lack of area orientation and language skills, confusion over objectives, and ridiculously short tours of duty. They do their job, walk away . . . and the dull thud you hear is the collapse of another hastily erected logistics system.

So you have situations like this: the locals get a shipment of, say, .50-caliber MGs—but nobody has told them how to adjust the headspace. They get land mines—but they

*But by the early spring of 1989, El Salvador itself should be considered solely from the perspective of losers and lost causes. See Part 5.

don't even know how to arm them. Their American patrons ship them mortars . . . but local mortarmen know little or nothing about aiming devices, night firing, or even basic firing techniques. And they don't even know how to clean their weapons.

Amorers are in short supply. So are medics—let alone doctors—communications specialists, demo instructors, auto mechanics, helicopter technicians, electricians, and so on.

Systems—and people who know how to organize them and keep them going—are most desperately needed. You'll find that your Third World army, U.S. aided, lacks even a functional infantry-weapons repair system. The same for military *footwear*. Any time a U.S. military assistance program is put in place, you can expect an ongoing crisis in supplying your side with adequate shoes, let alone combat boots. Curious!

On a more advanced level, people who know how to organize warehousing and distribution systems are also wanted. Present systems, and not only in Central America, are a shambles. In fact, you'll find that most of these military establishments not only don't know where all their gear is, they don't even know what they have. A halfway experienced guy from Sears would be more of an asset than an airborne colonel. And if some civilian genius could be found who would inventory both existing and *potential* military resources, evaluate them, and set up a control system, he'd do more for the cause than would a score of choppers. Creative logisticians are needed for everything from tracking down moldy munitions in forgotten ware-

houses to replacing semiliterate male military clerks with bright young women from private business.

This is what's happening increasingly in Third World wars. Civilian volunteers are moving in. They come either as informal part-timers or as full *asesores técnicos*—technical advisers—working for and paid by the local government. These are not part of the detested and ineffective “counterpart” advisory arrangement. The retaining of technical consultants is a longtime practice—and doesn't arouse the resentment the locals feel toward foreign military officers.

In fact, experienced foreign civilian volunteers—“mercs”—have already proven their value in Central America at the logistics and training level. They could be the wave of the future. You could be one of them—but you will need a technical specialty.

This specialty need not be strictly technical. Here's a prime example.

Pick a war, any current conflict—you've got about forty to choose from—and you'll find on either or both sides a *horrendous shortage of qualified NCOs*, particularly senior or staff NCOs.

One of the few truly important advantages enjoyed by the American, British, French, and German armed forces is that each has a highly skilled and experienced corps of non-commissioned officers. This enormous asset is seldom appreciated—until one works with Third World armies.

The world is awash with colonels—particularly in the U.S. and the Third World. What is really needed are sergeant majors, master gunnery sergeants, platoon sergeants—any NCO capable of leading small units in action. If our

side ever learns small-unit action, the heavier exercises will take care of themselves. Trouble is . . . lack of good staff NCOs. To put it another way, there are armies around the world desperately in need of NCO procurement, training, and development systems—and they're getting little or no help from our high-priced military-assistance missions; they themselves need fewer colonels and more veteran sergeants.

So, if you're a retired senior sergeant, or a "mustang" who clawed your way up through the ranks, there's a market for your services out there—not in the field but in the headquarters and training centers of embattled Third World armies. For the first time, I think, armies like that of El Salvador are finally breaking tradition and seeking help in developing NCO cadres.

It won't be easy. Strong NCO leadership is not traditional in most armies. Neither officers nor enlisted men have much confidence in their NCOs—nor do the sergeants feel very confident themselves. You'll have to overcome traditional social and ethnic attitudes as well as military custom. It'll take time.

Meanwhile, you have this quaint but typical situation: a combat patrol goes out, led by a lone officer. When the officer sicks in, the war stops for that unit. If he gets shot, drunk, captured, or otherwise rendered nonfunctional, the unit mills around like sheep. They may not even know where they are; only the officer knows anything about land navigation. And their heavier weapons are rendered useless. The officer may be the only soldier in the unit who can handle a recoilless rifle or position mortars or MGs. Incapacitate the CO and the whole unit is helpless.

As you see, you don't need advanced military skills to try to remedy the above. Graduate of staff colleges are not what's needed. But a few good Old Army NCOs bored with civilian life might well be able to change history in wars our official military missions are now losing.

As with all your overseas ventures, make preliminary contact before you launch off into the country under attack. The old-boy network will probably be able to supply names of contacts in that country—and quite possibly come up with names and locations of specific senior officers there to approach.

Failing that, or if you've yet to develop network of contacts, get in touch with local nationals and their groups in your community. They'll know somebody—or pass you on to somebody who does. Virtually every country in the world under attack or already occupied by the bad guys has support groups in this country. Even the Tibetans have a sizable liberation group going—concentrated in New Jersey, of all places. And most of these countries or groups have Washington representation.

But don't expect much cooperation from the embassies and consulates of the Third World countries in which you're interested (though you may get some information). Embassy personnel will refer you to their military attachés—and their attachés are often as not political or military misfits who have been shipped out of the country into diplomatic exile. That idiotic practice is still with us; be guided accordingly—and you might also bear in mind that U.S. military attachés abroad are often almost as inappropriate as their Third World counterparts in Washington.

No, Joe, best you circumvent the official circuit: make

contact through the network of friendly civilian nationals of the country involved, then follow up with a personal appearance at army headquarters in the target country. But that army will *not* finance your trip. Those friendly civilians may put up the money, however, and have even been known to subsidize volunteers to save their homelands. But you'll *never* get much money from *official* sources. *You're still a novice*, remember? The big money comes later—maybe!

Entry Level Route 4: International Security Agencies

A veteran Miami-based independent operative named Roger Gibson handles a wide range of brains-and-balls accounts for the rich international clientele who can afford to pay top dollar for his services. Gibson is Miami's premier PI and charges accordingly. He is essentially a one-man operation.

What he does is what you'll learn to do—and it's also a potential entry route for you: he *subcontracts*. He has a talent pool literally at his fingertips: in his computer. For any job he knows exactly who and what he needs and where to find them. In other words, he's a master of mercenary logistics.

Gibson's computerized talent breaks down into three broad classifications:

1. Veteran mercenaries of the hard-men variety.
2. Technicians: electronics experts, licensed shipmasters, pilots, investigators.

3. International contacts and affiliates familiar with their local scene.

That's the who and the what of his personal logistics. If you have to ask *where* he recruits those guys he has in that memory bank . . . then you sure ain't ready for his type of action. You build those contacts over the years, boy. They're like money in the bank. And you don't pick them out of the Yellow Pages or *Soldier of Fortune* classified. . . .

The demand for qualified personnel in the booming multibillion-dollar worldwide security business is vastly greater than qualified personnel available. *There are people out there getting rich, Joe, from this fear-crazed world who probably know less about this sort of thing than you do.* That's a fact. And that's why I'm listing it here as an entry route. In truth, of course, it could be an entire career—and, in fact, many or most paramilitary professionals are into security-agency service for much of their careers and often end up incorporating themselves.

Successful professionals in this field, like all good paramilitaries, know the value of contacts—but they go a step further: they seek out and keep in touch with people *who can do things for them and/or their clients that they can't do for themselves*. It's a real skill. If you have it—plus a definite knack for organizing and manipulating people—you'll go right to the top, no matter whether you call yourself a paramilitary or private investigator.

But let's define now a bit more closely what we're talking about. The new agencies are involved with industrial security—but only on a sophisticated international level.

The new private investigators don't go in much anymore for divorce cases, but they might if the fee is high enough. And in fact some of these new agencies can and will deal with any kind of a conflict situation up to and including full-blown warfare. It's an interesting trend.

So the old labels of "private investigator" and "security consultant" are becoming less and less accurate as job titles. Sometimes the new models call themselves management consultants, even public affairs counsellors. What they all have in common is that they belong to the fear-and-conflict industry.

What they also have in common is that they greet job hunters with a demand for "experience," a term you've probably already encountered. It's a problem, but not insurmountable. Time was that "experience" meant a solid background in civil and/or military police work before you'd even be considered. No more. The fear-and-conflict field is now so vast and varied that personnel requirements have expanded accordingly. You may already have the experience and/or skills needed by the industry.

In fact, most retired cops and traditional private investigators simply don't fit into the new security industry. They are almost as irrelevant to current global conflict as conventional colonels. What the industry needs above all is people who adapt readily to this scene—and have some special area of expertise. Location is also important in crashing the industry. The type of firms you're looking for are concentrated in not more than a half-dozen U.S. cities: New York, Miami, Washington, Los Angeles, Denver-Boulder and the old-boy concentration at Fayetteville, N.C.

Your target firms are in those cities. You're looking initially for small security agencies. Most have been founded since 1960, and most of those within the past decade. They are managed mainly by former Federal agents—and many or most have a definite Agency connection. Some are outright proprietaries. But all are on the lookout for fresh talent. They live on contacts and they know it.

Send them a decent résumé and it'll be carefully scanned. If nothing else, it'll go into an active file. These little agencies have to depend on people like you for field troops as the need arises. And that need, however esoteric and however unlikely you may consider your background, may be precisely what you have.

Moreover, these agencies and their management form a definite subculture of their own—which in turn is closely linked to that of the paramilitaries. It's all incestuous as hell! And if they like you but can't use you straightaway, they'll likely as not point you at somebody who can. . . . And it won't be charity on their part. You'll owe them; they'll eventually take it out in trade.

You should, if at all possible, have an intro to these people. Actually, one good contact might be enough to open that first door which is open sesame to this twilight zone. If you go cold, select a target and arrange to meet him—do very little by mail or phone—and if you're determined, you can meet almost anyone.

You can also find the exact type of security agency you want if you put your mind to it—and if you remember what I said about doing your homework and knowing how to work a library. They're all there—even the ones who try

to make like little clandestine warfare units and operate in deep cover.

By no coincidence, you'll be meeting many of these same people if you go this next route.

Entry Level Route 5: CIA Contract Work

Let's be reasonably clear what we're talking about here: nongovernment service work for the Central Intelligence Agency. We're not talking how to join the Agency. Nor does your civilian association with the Agency entail a written contract—at least not with the CIA itself. Okay?

There'll be loud cries from the fraternity at listing Agency service under entry level. Only after you've paid your dues in the elite military can you aspire to the allegedly higher calling of Agency paramilitary . . . or so goes the legend. That's no longer true.

But it's still risky business, not made less so by the Agency's incredibly erratic handling of its contract people—although you will certainly have more personal security as an Agency paramilitary than you would have as an independent.

Entry can take two distinct routes.

Your chances for strictly entry-level work as an Agency paramilitary—not necessarily a contract employee—seem better than at any time in the last twenty-five years or so. It used to be that the Agency demanded super soldiers of the Rambo type. No more. There are a few old-timers like that around, but not many. Most of the current subcontract variety now more closely resemble Gomer Pyle.

Language requirements have always been surprisingly low. Now they're nonexistent. So is operational area expe-

rience and expertise. However, to be fair, just above this subspecies is an elite minority. They have professional polish—and it is these people who are contracted right out their elite military units or via the old-boy network; they are not entry level.

Beginners and old boys alike do face an employment problem. It may become paramount in the years ahead. What seems to be emerging is a corps of Agency paramilitaries native to the areas in which they serve. Some of the ethnics are damn good and equipped with area expertise the Anglos lack. The latter have reason to worry.

Of course, Agency operators always have plenty to worry about. So do their clients. As Nicaraguan rebel leader Eden Pastora puts it, the Agency has a gift for catalytic conversion in its collaboration with people like the contras: "Everything the Agency touches," says Pastora, "turns to shit." I'm sure he got that line from me—and I picked it up from somebody else about twenty-five years ago.

Advantages of Agency employment, however, are many—not the least being you're reasonably free to pursue your chosen profession, even if within tightly controlled limits. No matter your entry route, you people seem to end up here anyway. And, finally, once in the Club, you know what your parameters are. If you don't violate Club rules, you can play in the Agency's yard.

That's important. The Agency's reputation for catalytic conversion, as per Pastora, refers largely to politically imposed violation of those parameters. Otherwise, the organization can be extremely effective.

Second entry route into Agency contract work is

through the ranks of the four routes into SOF work discussed earlier. All of them will be under nominal surveillance not so much by Agency officers as by all the assorted contract types, old boys, honorary members, associates, and other fellow travelers grouped around the Agency. Some people call them collectively "the Club."

The Club is a bizarre institution which wields more real power than the Agency itself. You'll be running into Club members throughout your career. Their numbers are legion.

You don't so much join the Club as ooze into it. A sort of melding process takes place. However, it follows a rather ritualistic formula that resembles a mating dance. It's the Club that does the selecting and drawing of members into its fold—but the prospective member is led to believe that he is the one petitioning for admission. Vague flirtation signals fly back and forth. The novices meet with veteran groupies. The latter make veiled references to the organization. The candidate comes back with eager noises . . . and at some point the waltzing stops and all hands get down to cases. And you're suddenly in the Club—often for life.

If they want you badly enough, some groupie will simply give you a phone number to call—although you're supposed to coax it out of him. Even then, you'll go through the usual circumlocution and more maneuvers . . . but it'll end in a meeting.

Your entry into this strange conglomerate doesn't automatically confer any special privileges on you. Much depends on your status prior to joining. If you were a nickel-and-dimer at the time, chances are a nickel-and-dimer

you'll remain—unless you show good cause to the contrary. But here is where you'll find the ultimate in contacts, the absolute business necessity you'll need. Here, also, is where you redefine and refine the term *mercenary*.

Your fellow mercs in the Club will range from other paramilitaries to Wall Street bankers to aboriginal tribesmen. They will include cops, congressmen, industrialists, arms dealers, private investigators, publishers, clerics, terrorists, diplomats, soldiers—and about half the crowd you ran into during your scam-journalist initiation, if you chose that route. Right from the beginning you become aware of the dazzling range of Club membership—and its enormous power potential. You are intended to be overwhelmed—and are.

Assume you're a loyal and capable Club member. You've paid your dues in the minor paramilitary leagues of the Third World. You're tired of the rice and beans, snakes and amoebas circuit—or at least you want more security and more money. . . . If somebody up there—I'm not sure exactly where—likes you, Joe, you'll find yourself with your own security agency. Or maybe you call it a management consulting business or public affairs agency. When you operate overseas you'll find areas opening up to you that were previously denied. You'll find plenty of contracts from clients steered to you by your good buddies in The Club. You'll prosper.

True, in return, lifelong loyalty is demanded. I myself have no trouble with that one; the environment demands it. You must submit to the Club rules. Did you expect a free ride? And there are penalties for breaking the rules. Again, fair enough. And for many people, belonging to

this secret consortium of power, talent, and wealth is an almost mystic experience. It's the only thing giving meaning and importance to their lives.

For most in this way of life, membership in the Club is the ultimate objective. For others, a stubborn few, nothing in the world could induce them to go this route. That includes me.

Section 3:

Employment Notes

I know; except possibly the last route, the foregoing is way short of glamor. The pay is low. The food is lousy. But look at it this way:

You're gaining experience in two basic fields that are crucial to success in this trade. You're developing skills and experience for which there is real demand: logistics as a constant throughout your career, and intelligence when you have attained soldier of fortune status. You're also gaining area experience.

In all three categories, you don't have to go far to outclass the Federals. Big Uncle's boys—with exceptions—have their intelligence handed to them. Their logistics are worked out for them by higher authority. But what they get in both cases is *not good enough to win wars*. They also tend to be way short on operational area experience—again with distinguished exceptions, namely the proprietary contractees and ethnics.

So you become valuable property from everybody's point of view.

The road you'll probably follow will take you into field mercenary ranks and perhaps on into soldier of fortune status. And it's there you get a chance at the big bucks that go with logistics and intelligence. Meanwhile, accept your apprenticeship. The pay is low—but so is the risk, low compared to what happens to those who plunge into this thing blind and unprepared.

But whatever your employment status, this will always be a risky business. You can reduce the risks. From the beginning, observe a few key rules of employment.

Clients and Accounts

Whoever your patron may be—military commander, rebel leader, wealthy businessman, warlord—the fact that you are basically an outlaw has a definite attraction. He knows, or thinks, that what he needs is a cannibal mercenary at his side—a ruthless operative unbound by the laws of man, God, Washington, or Moscow.

But let's be practical. Self-preservation dictates that you observe certain rules of the game and avoid head-on confrontations with official power. Your world is just too complicated for Rambo-type antics. However, neither is there a market out there for our sane and sober citizens. They aren't relevant in Third World fire-storms. So try to strike a balance. Combine a keen, well-controlled mind with the instincts and skills of a savage—and wed both to a solid knowledge of what this business is all about. And take care to keep that savage under control.

Your most rewarding kind of account as an experienced merc? Easy—service with a Third World warlord.

That means life charged to a peak of intensity: danger,

money, conflict, women, power—all melded into a single dazzling life-style. The danger is constant. Nothing will quite prepare you for what you see and experience. But it sure beats selling insurance or any other decent, honorable occupation.

Your problem with warlords is that you have to keep their staff and entourage at bay. You've got to establish direct working contact with the Old Man—and keep it that way.

You're probably conditioned to accepting the chain of command—disregard it. Don't go through intermediaries. Go around them. Don't "interface" or "liaise" or "coordinate" with anybody—unless it's at the *jefe's* direct orders.

You can get away with it. His own nationals couldn't. One reason he's taken you into his service is your lack of togetherness with all those gangsters who surround him. He's paying you to be a wild card, a maverick. You're not locked into the system like the others.

What's difficult is that you have to provide the *appearance* as well as fact of loyalty. Never give him cause to be suspicious. You don't want to upset him, Joe. Never forget for whom you're working. It's like romping daily with a rich, friendly, powerful sabertooth tiger. . . . He's unpredictable as hell, but he abides by one rule of employee relations: Serve him loyally and he'll lavish on you all the goodies that go with his and your job—wealth, power, and privilege.

Make the most of it, Joe Merc. It won't last. Neither will your boss. For you, if you're lucky and have your evasion plan and kit in order, it's merely a one-way trip back to

reality—and maybe even back to scanning *Soldier of Fortune* classifieds.

But it was fun—and immensely profitable—while it lasted.

Now . . . what is your *worst* kind of account?

Again the answer is easy: corporate accounts, business execs. Directly or indirectly, the multinationals (and smaller companies too) are employing corporate mercenaries in unprecedented numbers. You might well find yourself working for one. And they pay well. But you'll earn your money, old buddy.

First off, be aware of one crucial fact that will distort your whole relationship with this type of client. You are working for cowards. There is not only hyped-up corporate fear of any involvement in your kind of situation. There is raw personal fear as well. Fear is always good for your business, of course, but even so it can become a little much.

It starts out like this: A corporation's overseas subsidiary has been hit with a crisis—bombings, kidnappings, sabotage, extortion . . . the usual scene. Or it may simply be that a more alert overseas subsidiary manager is becoming aware that his country has been targeted and is now moving into vulture's row.

Corporate execs will contact you—but not, directly. They'll go through an outside agency or intermediary. Whatever their problem overseas, what they want from you is twofold: resolve the damn thing, whatever it is—and keep them out of it. They "don't want to get involved." That includes getting "involved" with you.

Initially, your corporate client is a very docile creature.

He's docile both with you and with the bad guys out there. You'll be startled at how eager they are to appease the terrorists. They may not only want to buy their way out of the immediate crisis; they'll also want you to try to initiate negotiations to work out a permanent arrangement. Payoffs as insurance. It never works in the long run, but that's not your problem.

If the terrorists can be put on retainer, why not you? That'll be your thought. And why not? You know the bad guys will be back for seconds. And you need a steady income, however small. So you're tempted to cut your initial fee to the bone in hopes of being put on retainer.

Don't cut that fee! Don't skimp on expenses. Bill the company top dollar for both. The expense is not the key factor to the company in deciding whether to put you on retainer. *You are.* You and what you represent. Look at it from their point of view.

You do your job and corporate panic ebbs. You're sitting in an executive suite in Manhattan or Toronto or London and you and the guy on the other side of the desk look at each other. Do you know what he's seeing? He's seeing a mercenary. You're as alien to him as an extraterrestrial. To him, you and those terrorists out there are pretty much the same breed. You're both gangsters. He is even uneasy about your being in this office—you remind him that the nightmare he's gone through was real.

And if he can get rid of you before you jump chaste Miss Manners, his executive secretary in the outer office, he won't blink at the billing you hand him. But don't expect a retainer.

That's the way it goes. You'll probably find, too, that

your corporate client has buried payments made to you under phony listings in the company books. It'll be marked that way right on your checks. He's afraid of his own accounting department, his board, the newspapers—not to mention you and the real terrorists. And that's real fear you smell.

Fact is, tiger, you leave the executive suite finally realizing you do have more in common with those other animals out there. However, there's one trait your business clients share with the warlord types: To them, Joe, you are expendable. A throwaway.

Learn to Say NO

That's right. NO. It's the most important word in your vocabulary. Because right from the beginning, even as a lowly novice paramilitary, you'll probably have people coming at you with propositions both crazy and lethal. That goes with the job.

The job automatically throws you into the company of very strange people and equally exotic environments and situations. Weirdos abound. And even normal people seem to think mercenary types are basically hellbent on suicide . . . with the corollary attitude that if you *do* get killed—shrug—no great loss to society. . . .

"What the hell," they say to you, "you're paid to take risks. What's the matter? No balls?"

You have every right, compadre, to take both the kamikaze proposition and the above crack as insults. You're no throwaway. Go ahead, throw one right back at the sonofabitch.

"It's not that, boss. But suicide is not in my rules of engagement. *Go yourself, you piece of shit!*"

The macho thing can be murderous in this business. I've seen men launch off on one-way trips to oblivion, missions they themselves actually knew to be doomed—but they were afraid to say no, afraid of that "no balls" label.

My first experience with this phenomenon was back in 1959: I watched a planeload of terrified foreign mercs take off on a mission to Castro's Cuba they *knew* to be a trap. Me, I was less inhibited; I aborted. It was indeed a trap—although a relatively minor skirmish unworthy of such dumb courage. The struggle continued . . . war without end. And I can't even remember the names of those poor brave bastards who died in that crazy flight to oblivion. Life goes on.

Think for yourself—coolly and professionally—always looking out for number one. That's the priceless right and luxury you enjoy as an independent mercenary. You can tell anybody to fuck off. Don't hesitate to exercise that right.

Don't forget, however, that one of the prime commodities you're offering the marketplace is your willingness to risk. That attracts customers. It's up to you to evaluate risk and reduce it, if possible, to a situation of at least partly controlled risk.

Reduce the Risk in Risking

Take the romance out of risking; put the profit motive in. You can reduce the risk factor by being businesslike in your risk acceptance. The fundamental rule is that *if you take risks, you get paid accordingly*.

Never let yourself be drawn to risk taking for its own sake. Never let risking become an end in itself.

Putting risking on a firm monetary basis tends to screen out the crazies on both sides. It reduces the emotional factor. Both parties, client and operator alike, suddenly become more realistic. They observe, evaluate, plan.

General George Patton put it this way:

"Take calculated risks. That is quite different from being rash."

However . . . you can have cash up front, plan, run through checklists, calculate the odds accurately—and still crash in flames. There are two elements almost impossible to factor into your risk plan.

—You can never accurately gauge in advance another's response to high risk, whether friend or foe.

—You can never control the *unforeseen* factor—and that's something seemingly inherent in Third World wars and clandestine ops and operators.

Always expect the unexpected in that environment. Your best risk-free plans will often go awry—while idiot luck may suddenly blossom amid carnage-and-comic-opera routines that should have ended in lethal failure. Don't try to figure it; just accept.

The only thing you can do is base your risk acceptance on calculating the known odds—and factor in an ample margin for the two big unknowns. This involves, say experts—yes, people actually study risking—three basic components:

Recognition of the need to take a risk.

Devising a plan and setting it in motion.

Executing it through to completion.

As you continue through your career you will very likely be bedeviled by a psychological factor that will raise hell with your risk calculation: the urge to test yourself, again and again and again. And sooner or later, good buddy, it'll kill you dead. Happens all the time.

It happened to Dickey Chapelle, just as she knew it would. The renowned female journalist covered fifteen conflicts and was a certified war freak, a real addict.

"Combat terrifies me," she once told me. "But you know something? It's also so damn exhilarating it's orgasmic. I mean literally."

"I know easier ways," I suggested. She ignored me.

"There's something else," she said. "Each time I go back I have to prove all over again that I'm still me. I don't want to change. Change to me means getting old. But I know this proving myself is a crazy compulsion. It'll get me killed one of these days."

"Probably will," I agreed. And it did. Vietnam.

Dickey was all woman, believe me, but she had more balls than nine tenths of her male counterparts. What she had in common with you, if for no other reason than you're reading this manual, is a compulsion to test herself. You should be aware you have that same tendency. And not only in the context of a single risky adventure, but also cumulatively over the years. Keep it up and risking evolves into sheer self-destruction.

Even so . . . the challenge is probably what draws you to this way of life. And risking for you *is* a reward in itself.

In the words of another professional risk-taker, racing-

car champion Wilbur Smith: "I don't think a man really understands the rewards of life until he has risked it."

But risk wisely. And be alert to the possibility that your employer and his objectives are not what they seem.

Don't Play the False Flags Game

This whole business is predicated on *manipulation*—on principals and patrons doing their damndest to induce other people to work for them.

One recruiting technique, now flourishing, is called False Flags. It's the most popular game since Monopoly—and infinitely more complicated.

False Flags comes in two models:

1) The classic form. That's when you think you're working for one side but you're actually serving the other or a third party.

2) The most popular present model: You have been induced to serve people whose motives and objectives are quite different from those you had been led to expect when recruited.

This is the era of the proxy agent and surrogate combatant, an era of strange alliances, of double and triple agents, of small and massive deceptions, of subagents and subcontract agents in which even the proxies have proxies.

Yet, a lot of that complexity and deception is itself fake—meaning it's designed less to dupe the participants than it is to deceive the outside world. False Flags, for instance, is rarely a real deception. Mercenaries of all persuasions are heavily into the thing—and I doubt if any of them are really blind and oblivious to the prime movers and motives

behind any given False Flags operation. They know what's going down.

Unless they're complete amateurs or utter idiots, most merc paramilitaries can spot False Flagging at a glance. Unless they sense a setup—which is also fairly frequent—they'll usually play the game out. They'll go along with the charade. They rationalize it as part of the overall game. And big bucks are invariably put into the pot to sweeten the game.

None of the above makes it any less dangerous. Or odious. The vast majority of these False Flags exercises involve particularly nasty jobs and people. You'll find yourself gunrunning to alleged freedom fighters, for instance, when you know full well you're gunrunning for straight profit. You'll find yourself trafficking in dope, allegedly to subvert officials of a government sponsoring that traffic—but you and the rest of the hands know goddamn well you're just trafficking in dope. Period. You get hired to train guerrillas to topple a friendly government. You're told the operation is needed to maintain a "strategic balance." You know what you're doing, with whom you're working—but you rationalize away the implications.

Your patrons may win at the game, Joe, but you won't—not in the long run. Often as not, *both* sides combine to destroy a False Flag bit player—particularly when he's in deep and no longer useful. If not that, you're quickly used up, "burned," in that game and become a pariah.

You can spot the symptoms early. If your new gang appears to be doing more for the other side than yours, something is wrong. When you have to start rationalizing,

something's wrong. Same for their rationalizations. *Trust yourself; if it goes against your instincts, bail out—fast!*

In your risk calculation, a False Flags signal wipes out any positive factors involved. You abort. That's basic. And you automatically walk away if other basic parameters are violated.

Paramilitary Parameters

You'll soon become conscious of the fact that you don't have to even leave home to get yourself involved in foreign conflict. The parameters of the friendly or free world are shrinking. More and more, the world's wars are swirling closer to home.

It's getting so you can find potential clients and their causes right in your hometown. Exiles in North American cities often commute to wars in Southeast Asia and Central America. So do Uncle's nephews. You'll be tempted to do the same.

Get acquainted—and stay acquainted—with two facts of paramilitary life. One is the existence of *selective law enforcement*—and you never can be absolutely sure you enjoy immunity—and the other is this survival principle: *Never foul your home base.*

You see other guys running around fracturing laws and literally getting away with murder—but don't you do it! I don't give a damn if you think you're Uncle's favorite nephew. I've known other people who had that misconception; they are no longer with us. Take nothing for granted.

Again the rules:

Don't even "conspire" in the States.
 Do not recruit in the States.
 Stay away from auto weapons in the States.
 Do not train as a group in the States.
 Do not try to ship weapons from the States.
 Do not leave the States as a group or initiate any hostile action against another country from the States.

Bear in mind, too, that these prohibitions hold true for Britain and the Commonwealth countries—only more so. All the cousins play by strict rules. One of the oldest and firmest is that Americans don't mess around in former British colonies or Commonwealth member nations. Grenada and the American volunteers in Rhodesia were authorized exceptions to the rule.

The CIA also plays by this rule. In 1971, for instance, the Agency backed the secession of East Pakistan, Bangladesh, from Pakistan in the west. But the Agency used only British mercs for the job.

Unwritten rules like that are in place around the world. They change constantly. And they're often violated. In practical terms, the rules and parameters are valid only insofar as those who have decreed them are able to enforce them.

And however rule abiding you may be, expect friction with alleged friendlies on your side. It's an inevitable by-product of this admittedly weird way of life.

Professional Relations

You yourself may be a paragon of paramilitary virtues—but still become a one-merc disaster area abroad because

you did not know how to cope with the other people in your operational environment. And I don't mean the official enemy. He's the least of your worries. Just never forget the people on your side, those friends and allies beside you, the patrons behind you . . . and your compatriots in the embassy and military missions.

They will always pose more danger to you than do the guys you're paid to fight. Learn this right from the first.

—Even as a lowly entry-level paramilitary you are an object of suspicion and loathing by the officials directing various assistance programs in your mutual operational area. Keep always up front that *there's inherent antagonism between officials and free-lances, between Freddies and wild cards*. Get them pissed off and they'll have you deported. And don't think they can't force you out if it comes down to a confrontation.

—The local boys aren't exactly virginal when it comes to warfare. Your kind of war has raged globally nonstop since World War II. The local military already has more experience than most of the U.S. advisers already there. You, Joe, have to offer something extra before you're accepted as a combat leader. We'll see what we can do about that; meanwhile, a little humility is in order.

—Never, never trust anybody in the paramilitary field! Those associates of yours, those good buddies from the camps, those priceless contacts I told you—accurately—you had to have . . . they can be and are as dangerous as hell. You are hereby warned!

Most of these people you're going to meet are tied in with other people, other groups, other institutions and agencies. These others have a handle on your good buddy

. . . and if it comes down to a flat decision, he'll buckle under to their demands—at whatever cost to you.

—There's also a peculiar factor at work among people drawn to this way of life: a curious compulsion among many of them to betray . . . for the sake of betrayal. We could debate the "why" of this situation all day—but why bother? It's a factor built in to this way of life. You just have to allow for it.

But you, Joe, try to restrain yourself. You'll have ample opportunity to shaft your buddies. Don't do it. In the end it's just not worth it.

—And that goes for your patrons and clients by a factor of ten. Loyalty is a rare commodity. People will pay anything for it. But your colleagues, doing what comes naturally, invariably bite off the hand that pays them. They also die suddenly and broke. Don't be stupid. *Your reputation for loyalty is like money in the bank as well as an insurance policy.*

—Finally, Joe, it just isn't professional for you to group together with your buddies and offer yourselves as a "team" or "strike force." It's also outdated.

If you're a professional, you will work with, for, under, and over the nationals of the cause you have selected. Other foreign volunteers may also be involved. But nobody likes an excess of mercenary togetherness no matter who you are or what you have to offer. If you're a bunch of all-American boys, you are a disaster waiting to happen. You'll be specifically targeted by the enemy. You're a potential embarrassment to your country. You groupies will be the first to be deported if international pressure is brought to bear. Your own patrons and his people will be

turned off if you cling tightly to your nationality group. In other words, you just don't blend into the environment as you must to be effective.

You're presumably a big boy now. If you need togetherness, you can find it at home. And if and when you leave home you might find it useful to shed most of your old identity as well as your former associates.

Personal Nomenclature

Consider names, including yours. People in this way of life take a childish delight in playing with names. They love nicknames and assumed names and, above all, noms de guerre—which is just a fancy term for a phony name.

Of course, an alias can be a necessity. It gives you and your family some protection—but not much. Anybody's basic ID can be established with a little digging. However, pseudonyms are useful for brief missions. And occasional changes of nomenclature can be confusing to hostiles—as well as to oneself.

Anyway, feel free to play the names game like the rest of the kids. If you want a nom de guerre to go with your new self-image, it's yours to choose. Sometimes it works wonders. I know an Emil Grossman who emerged with dashing new nomenclature and he's actually shaping himself, physically and mentally, to befit his nom de guerre.

However, the workaday world still viewed him as old Emil Grossman—so he made his new name official. And it's easily done.

You can, if you're interested, do an illegal name change by going the false-birth-certificate route. Or simply go through a clearly defined and almost automatic legal pro-

cedure. You file what is called a court petition attesting that you are not in bankruptcy proceedings and have not been convicted of a felony. A court date is set, usually in a couple weeks, a judge briefly hears your petition—and almost always agrees to authorize your new name.

But remember . . . your splendid *nom de guerre* does little to enhance your personal security. You're a potential target under any name.

Go the Gray Ghost Mode

Be inconspicuous in your personal conduct, a nebulous presence in your operational area.

Stay away from public places. Do your drinking and screwing in private. Keep your life story to yourself, not to mention avoiding clear identification of who you are, what you're doing, and where you live. No boasting. Stay out of arguments. No flashy cars or living quarters. Use the telephone sparingly and carefully. Don't invite correspondence from places like Washington, D.C., and Miami. No fixed patterns. . . .

This will probably conflict with your urge for a flamboyant new way of life. Tough. It should *not* conflict with your need to make a strong professional imprint on your patron and his colleagues. You can demonstrate your professionalism without waving it like a flag. Flaunt it and you'll be a high-profile target for resentful people on your side as well as the enemy's.

You've heard the expression that there are old pilots and bold pilots—but no old, bold pilots. The same is true in this business. With rare exceptions flamboyant, famed mercenaries are dead mercenaries.

Should you survive and make it to full-service independent operative status, then you can revel in your celebrity. Flaunt it. But until then . . . the less tangible a target you present, the greater your chances of attaining that status.

Flashpoint!

It was June 1985 and I'd just returned from El Salvador and was preparing a confidential report for my sponsors. It focused particularly on the U.S. Military Group, El Salvador, and the role of the U.S. embassy in the situation there. I also laid stress on a factor which neither the Group, the embassy, nor Washington had really noticed: the sudden and characteristic shifting of rebel focus from guerrilla warfare to urban terrorism.

The security imposed on U.S. personnel in San Salvador was amazingly lax—particularly in view of the fact that U.S. policy had virtually destroyed the ability of local security forces to combat terrorism.

Before I'd finished my report, there was a massacre. A terrorist attack in a San Salvador restaurant area killed thirteen people, including two American civilians and four unarmed Marines.

The attack was not only predictable but inevitable. But our people were caught by surprise—also inevitable. Surprise, shock, the sudden strikes out of the night . . . they're what these wars are all about. But this we never quite learn.

What this means to you is that your steady stockpiling of experience and transition into professionalism can end as fast as the lives of those six Americans. You may be hit

by a flashpoint at any time. Your apprenticeship suddenly ceases. You're in real warfare.

You go to a war, sooner or later the war comes to you.

Or it may come about something like this:

To the locals, you're a rather mysterious figure. They automatically assume you're a real pro. You may note, too, that their leaders like to enhance that image. It adds to their status and shows the troops they have foreign support. So don't be surprised if you suddenly find yourself in a combat command capacity. Or advising on intelligence and tactics. You may not think you're ready—and you're probably right. No matter. You're now in deep.

Whatever the specifics, there will be a flashpoint in your transition from junior paramilitary to professional.

Can you handle it? That depends on you personally and how well you've prepared yourself for the transition shock. Perhaps you should take stock of yourself right now. Are you sure you want to go through with this? Let's quickly review what entry means.

Basic requirements for the mercenary are few and simple: strong personal motivation and an equally strong, agile, and controlled mind and body. That, plus your acquired expertise, is what your patron pays you for. He hires you for what you can do for him—not vice versa. He is not part of any "jobs program."

There are liberal fringe benefits—but no pension program. He'll probably throw a lot of freebies your way—but job security will be nil. Job performance is everything.

He will take care of you, generally, if you are incapacitated in his service. But even this is dicey. If you break down mentally, expect not even sympathy. "Combat fa-

tigue," "stress syndrome," and that sort of thing are not in your boss's medical dictionary. To him, it will mean only that you've become a possible security risk.

Despite the above, unstable types are just naturally drawn to this way of life. Many are seemingly hard-case characters, veterans and former professional soldiers—but even so they go to pieces in mercenary stress situations. Know thyself, merc . . . and don't say you haven't been warned.

PART 2

Mercenary Skills-at-Arms

Now you are moving into a combat mode. And once again you are confronted with this paramount problem: What product are you offering to the consumers? What are you selling that the Third Worlders don't already have—and can probably do better? *You've got to offer skills-at-arms they lack.*

In the old days, professional mercenaries had two main products to sell: skill with airplane and/or machine gun. They also had the benefit of a powerful sales promotion campaign in the form of an almost universal belief that white Western soldiers were infinitely superior to their black, brown, and yellow counterparts.

We fooled them for a while. Now you've got to sell yourself. And you do have assets the old boys didn't have. There is new technology yet to be exploited and new tactics to wed to that technology. We'll get to that. You'll have the same edge the old guys had.

But we still have to sell you as a warrior—not only to consumers but to you yourself. Heed this: You're going nowhere in this business unless you display genuine self-confidence. That means you're going to have to adjust to a world conflict scene no way like anything the old-timers faced.

As with the old-timers, the Third World of Asia, Africa,

and Latin America is your marketplace. It's where you must sell your services. It's a marketplace where conventional Western arms haven't prevailed significantly for forty years. So you have to come up with something different. Your potential clients are fully aware of this dismal record.

Yet, *initially*, you're going to have to offer them more of the same—the basic military know-how that all armies have in common. Of course, you'll be paid accordingly—meaning rice-and-beans money. But they don't know you yet and you have to build on your basics until you have earned their confidence and respect. Be patient. Soon enough your clients will be willing to listen to your proposed new style of warfare. After all, the reason they needed you in the first place is because they're losing.

But first . . . you've got to have mastery of the basics on which you're going to build. And if you're a typical vet of the regular military you're not even familiar with traditional skills-at-arms. The Marine Corps is an example. Once built around riflemen, the Corps now has only one man in four in line companies . . . meaning that three out of four Marines lack the skills needed in Third World warfare.

Section 1:

General Skills Orientation

Skills-at-arms. . . . You'd be surprised at how many veterans lack basic knowledge of field operations—and don't know it. They equate formal military service with military

expertise. They're familiar with the M16, know a little first aid, can fling a grenade—but there's no use checking them out on map reading or demo or intelligence or, God forbid, night combat.

Land navigation remains a mystery despite excellent training manuals on the subject. Jungle survival is an unknown. Area orientation is as nil now as it was forty years ago. So are language skills. Few would-be mercs are really into one-on-one total combat. Only a few genuine veterans can even talk intelligently about such crucial tactics as raids and ambushes. There are those who consider themselves knowledgeable bladesmen—but who would be disemboweled in the first three seconds of a real knife fight. Rarest of all are those who really understand their enemy.

This is not a military manual. Nor is it an encyclopedia. Each subject we cover you should expand on with your own research. That should be a never-ending process. On several basic subjects—by no means all—you can supplement your study by availing yourself of the Army field manual reprints you'll find advertised in soldier of fortune mags. But be careful with those official manuals: the table of organization and equipment is not what you'll encounter as a mercenary.

What that means to you, Joe Merc, is that your conventional military service may be more a liability than an asset. Your market is in the Third World. Your operational areas are there. Both your patrons and opponents are often likely to be guerrillas—and it simply ain't true that "any good soldier can handle a guerrilla."

That was the statement made back in 1962 by then Army Chief of Staff, General George Decker. It has been

echoing forlornly through the pages of military history ever since. The most recent comment I've heard on Decker's fantasy was by Lieutenant Colonel J. R. Hensman, Royal Marine commando, in the August 1985 issue of *Military Review*:

In the technological profession we call soldiering, the soldier has lost much of the capability of his less sophisticated forbears. He is no longer capable of walking long distances. . . . He is no longer capable of living off the land because he is always resupplied. I would question whether "any good soldier" nowadays can go off into the jungle for weeks at a time and lay up in an ambush position, observing and waiting to outsmart a guerrilla born and bred in that environment. Can "any soldier" blend in with the people of a city, set up an urban observation post, and remain alert until the urban guerrilla appears?

The truth of the matter is that the modern soldier is a transported radio-operating weapons-firer. Guerrillas will always choose terrain where the security forces are at a disadvantage—whether it be mountains, jungle, or inner city ghetto. Only those soldiers who are trained to operate in such places will be able to defeat guerrillas. "Any soldier" will not.

The point is this: While you do need the military basics, consider them merely the basis on which to build more advanced and different skills. *There is no real market out there for mercenaries in the conventional military mode.* You have to offer skills that most soldiers lack.

This manual stresses the need for you to adjust to the

night. That's because (1) your probable opponents are into night work, (2) our Western military record in night ops is ridiculously bad, and (3) there are twenty-four hours in a day, about half of them hours of darkness. And as a merc, you're always on call.

Make-do and improvisation are also qualities you're going to have to develop. You will simply have to shed the General Motors mentality. Forget you're from the land of the Great Big PX. Think small. You always have to shrink dimensions in our countries and wars. Tactically, think fire teams. And for firepower, light, miniaturized weaponry—if you can get it. You won't be needing heavy weapons, heavy vehicles, mountains of food, fuel, and ammo.

Don't even dream of electric typewriters, computers, film projectors, and air-conditioning. There'll be no prefab housing, no soda fountains, no baseball leagues. There'll be none of the staples so dear to a losing army. We don't want "another Vietnam."

What we don't need in the way of advanced skills far exceeds our relatively simple requirements in technique and technology. Our people wouldn't know what to do with a computer range officer or a nuclear demolitions specialist or an expert on submarine guidance systems. Of course, I do think sometimes we could use a good psychiatrist.

What is important to you as a mercenary is to relate to combat not in terms of the conventional military or police—but instead to your opposite numbers, the bad guys you're going to have to confront.

The *ideal* combatant in Third World wars, particularly the twilight zone of warfare populated by mercenaries as

well as terrorists and secret agents, has attributes common to all the participants. Apart from defensive security functions, the same skills apply.

Here's what a top officer of the South African Police, Brigadier Jan Visser, has to say about those skills:

To surmount the enormous difficulties and obstacles that lie in his way, the urban guerrilla is forced to be imaginative and creative. He must possess initiative, flexibility, and mobility as well as versatility and command of any situation. He dares not let himself become confused because he cannot wait for further orders. His duty is to act. . . .

Other qualities are to be a good worker, to be able to stand up against fatigue, hunger, heat, and thirst, to know how to hide and be vigilant, to master the art of dissembling, never to fear danger, to behave the same day and night, not to act impatiently, to have unlimited patience, to remain calm and cool in the worst situations. . . . No one can become an urban guerrilla without paying special attention to technical preparation. This runs from concern for his physical preparedness to knowledge of and apprenticeship in professions and skills.

It is important to him to learn to drive, pilot a plane, handle a motorboat, understand mechanics, radio, telephone, and electricity, and have some knowledge of electronics. It is also important to him to have a knowledge of topography, to be able to locate his position by instruments. . . . Knowledge of chemistry and of color combination, of stamp making, the copying of letters, and

other skills, are part of an urban guerrilla's preparation. He must have some understanding of medicine, nursing, pharmacology, drugs, elementary surgery, and emergency first aid . . . to know how to handle firearms such as machine guns, revolvers, shotguns, carbines, mortars, and so forth. He must also have a sound knowledge of ammo and explosives such as dynamite and plastics and the use of incendiary and other bombs.

The urban guerrilla is much preoccupied with vengeance, hatred, and death. Hatred for the enemy drives him beyond his physical limits and transforms him into an effective, selective, and cold machine for killing.

Does the above profile you exactly? Are you a master of all the above?

Not to worry! The foregoing was actually drawn by the South African cop from a textbook by urban guerrilla maestro Carlos Marighella. It describes the composite virtues needed by an entire guerrilla force. No such superguerrilla actually exists. Most guerrilla training is basically primitive.

In fact, there seems little relationship in actual practice between in-depth training and winning Third World wars. It has been pointed out that Western armies take six months to teach an infantryman his basic skills—while a guerrilla's training may take about as much time as it would an average person to learn to drive a car. It's an unfair analogy, true, but winning and losing wars is seldom fair.

(Which is why you, as a merc, can't win if you fight

strictly on guerrilla terms. *You have to make your superior skills count.*)

Most of the guerrilla's real power—apart from the West's structural vulnerability to that kind of warfare—is contained in the final paragraph of the foregoing quote. Guerrilla leaders and cadres are incredibly motivated. And you, as a mercenary, are actually more related to your guerrilla foe than you are to your conventional brethren. You can make motivation work for you.

Mike Echanis did it. He achieved an incredible transformation.

A Mercenary's Motivation

Mike Echanis was probably the most superbly skillful American mercenary in the business. That he was fatally flawed in another aspect—we'll look at that part later—changes that not one iota. Even those who finally had him murdered had nothing but praise for his professionalism.

It was a professionalism that owed nothing to the regular military. Mike the Merc was Echanis's own creation—and he transformed himself from ground zero. Badly wounded in Vietnam, he was sent back to the States—crippled, apparently, for life.

Echanis spent months in the hospital. At some point he made a decision: He would not only fight his way back to health; he would also go on to become a highly skilled professional—to use his term—“warrior.” And he did. Echanis *willed* himself to be a warrior. He experimented with several forms of karate, then embraced the obscure Korean martial art *hwarangdo*. Mike seems to have made as much impact on *hwarangdo* as *hwarangdo* did on him;

the art became pretty much what Mike made it. And what he sought and applied was a powerful blend of mental and physical combat techniques. He did his own selections, his own experimentation, wrote his own texts. The result was a new style of personal combat, a brilliant personalized composite—but his own style was seriously compromised by growing flamboyance and almost irrational self-confidence. Echanis became the ancient *hwarangdo* warrior incarnate.

Mike began to sound off like Conan the Conqueror when he entered the service of beleaguered President Anastasio Somoza in 1978. The Nicaraguan strongman and his crumbling army desperately needed men like Mike Echanis—but it was they who ended up destroying their own prize mercenary. Echanis had become an abrasive loudmouth, a publicity hound. He managed to piss off senior Nicaraguan officers. Mike also boasted of his CIA connection. Somoza withdrew his protection—and Somoza's officers promptly blew him away.

By common consent Mike the Merc's contract had been terminated. This sort of thing is not uncommon. Remember that. But also remember that Mike Echanis was able, on his own, to achieve a remarkable physical transformation and acquire a superb range of skills-at-arms.

If you can muster the same motivation Mike Echanis had—and exercise the kind of self-control Echanis lacked—there'll be no stopping you in this business.

Shock Training

If Mike Echanis could do it on his own, so can you. But the ideal mental and physical conditioning program is not

easily self-imposed. I'm talking about *total immersion*, training of such high intensity that it literally sends you into shock. Call it shock training.

We mean an immersion so brutally intensive that it strips you naked of your normal, sloppy civilian "you" and drives its messages so deep into your being that it imprints for life. Your old personality is smashed in shock training, discarded. Shock empties your old self and prepares you to accept the Savage Skills implant. You become like a babe learning to walk and speak for the first time.

I've seen nice middle-class kids go through shock training. These nice young people experience that total immersion, then emerge to slit throats with ease, enthusiasm, and great expertise. They have become warriors.

Ideally, shock training should be within the context of a highly compressed specific time period—a period best measured in weeks and days, not months. You lose high compression in a protracted period.

The shock phase, of course, should be only the beginning. The honing and refining of the mercenary skills should develop into a lifelong regimen. For professionals, the learning process never ceases. But they build their systems on that initial immersion.

Where can you get such training?

The military elite—SEALs, Special Forces (Green Berets) Rangers, Marines—still offer a reasonable facsimile in their high-intensity training programs. The deliberate brutality of total immersion is no longer possible, of course, at least not in the Western military. However, like it or not, total training *does* work. It does produce warriors. But

you'll have to apply it to training your Third World forces—if you get that far.

Meanwhile, make do with what you have—and it's plentiful. For your basics, regular military training in the Army or Marines; or Reserve units, National Guard, ROTC. You can, as we saw, get some damned intensive—but brief—training at several of the better "mercenary schools." Martial arts, carefully selected, are also part of the process. So is self-defense and survival training.

And don't forget your own self-designed training regimen while you're into institutional training. You'll find when you look, you have vast training resources on which to draw. Remember, there's much more to this way of life than can be provided by formal military training. In fact, there are some very successful mercs who have never been in the conventional military.

It's all a question of motivation. Seek and ye shall find.

But you're still a long way from leading commando raids. You'll literally have to learn to walk and run properly before you start blitzing anybody. You'll need to build endurance. That's aerobic energy, a household term these days. You don't need this book to tell you about aerobics.

However, here's another word to add to your vocabulary: *anaerobics*. That's what gives you speed and power when you need it most. Anaerobics is a system for building your vital sudden-burst-of-speed capability. Incidentally, it's significant that while anaerobic training is used increasingly in speed sports, it's still almost unknown in the conventional military.

Develop an Anaerobic Energy System

Anaerobic metabolism simply means energy produced without oxygen. It's a source of energy you should be aware of and know how best to utilize.

Bone and muscle can perform startling feats of strength, speed, and power for short bursts without needing to tie into the oxygen supply system. When muscle contracts anaerobically, it is fueled by chemicals that are stored in and around muscle cells and can be rapidly converted into muscle energy. This period of swift intensity is then followed by reduced and more extended energy supplied by oxygen.

It is the anaerobic system that provides immediate on-call power. It goes into action first with maximum physical strength. Then comes your "second wind" or "catching your breath," which is the shifting of your energy requirements to your slower, secondary system.

What you need, then, SOF, is anaerobic energy. You'll be going up against an enemy with mass and time on his side. If you get into a war of attrition, you won't stay the distance. You'll be dead: outnumbered, outgunned, outwaited. You're a commando type, not a guerrilla, ninja, not samurai, a warrior, not a conventional soldier. You fight best on your terms: application of shock power, fast and lethal, stab and run.

The sprinter is anaerobic. The long-distance runner, oxygenic. Like your combat operations, you must be physically geared to maximum energy output and high-powered muscle movement of the anaerobic system. Your slower, backup system is your reserve, the source of supply for endurance.

You will need both, of course. But you are probably more aware of your secondary system than you are of your sudden-burst-of-power capability. Military training overwhelmingly is geared to the secondary system. So is life generally. In your daily routine you're seldom called on for explosive outpourings of power.

Athletic instructors have now devised simple training programs designed to enhance explosive capabilities as well as strength for the long haul.

What this training comes down to is nothing more than conditioning the body to sudden surges of muscle power. This alternates with longer-haul endurance building. It's called *interval training*, meaning short periods of high-intensity activity followed by relative quiescence.

Significantly, the same power and impact is achieved during the intensity period as during the combined active-inactive cycle. Equally interesting, the resulting fatigue is less. In other words, expenditure of your energy reserve is less during high intensity than is the overall energy output extended with less intensity over a longer period to accomplish the same job. Intensity energy is more efficient and less dissipated.

The brief rest periods between bursts of power allow the biochemicals expended in anaerobics to replenish themselves. Muscle power is fueled and restored within seconds. This allows another burst of high intensity. And so on.

The energized intervals can be steadily increased in number as the body develops and the activity-to-inactivity ratio tips toward the activity phase.

Interval training can run the gamut of your training schedule: sprinting, speed firing, tree climbing, knife fight-

ing, swimming, weight lifting, contact combat . . . the whole regimen.

And it should also be introduced into more advanced or technical training: emplacing explosives, small-boat handling, raids and ambush field exercises, even communications and espionage.

Overall training schedules should also be just as staccato: total immersion in brief, intensive bursts. That kind of action will characterize your whole professional career. The time will come when you'll have to run—not jog—faster than a speeding bullet for the exits.

One of the best introductions to your kind of warfare—operating in a conflict environment characterized by sudden bursts of violence on both sides—is sustained exposure to one of the simpler, combat-oriented martial arts.

What's beautiful about martial arts is they have application across the whole spectrum of conflict. Take master swordsman Miyamoto Musashi's *Book of Five Rings*. He wrote it 340 years ago. Japanese businessmen use it today to map sales programs like military campaigns. Guerrillas and terrorists use it in revolutionary warfare—it was once required reading by the Tupamaros—while many otherwise ordinary people use it to chart their way through a violent world.

Musashi stresses the supreme importance of devising *systems* to survive and win in accord with the way of conflict. He advises us to acquire knowledge in all related professional fields, to develop intuition, awareness, and observation. And particularly useful to your profession is his prescription for always performing one's mission precisely, systematically, without wasted time or motion.

The doctrine works well in selling Toyotas. It'll also work for you.

You'll find its physical application in the "harder" style martial arts, particularly contact karate. Choose your specific system carefully. Same for your instructor. However valuable in other respects, you do not want a form heavy on philosophy, mysticism, good fellowship, ritual, and stylized *katas*. It is not that they are not valuable; you don't have the time to indulge in any exercise that would not be of direct benefit to you out in the world's back alleys and boonies.

There are several forms that lend themselves to your needs. Let's take a quick look.

Selected Martial Arts Systems

You've heard the jokes about "dojo ballerinas." And, of course, there's the *karateka* who was mugged in a dark alley by a stack of bricks. . . . What's less funny is that real black belts have often been demolished by untrained street fighters.

True, but martial-arts training can enhance your market value as well as your survivability. The big demand on the war market out there is *not* for people who know how to handle machinery that can hurl ordnance vast distances. The world is flooded with those people. The demand is for warriors—the fighting elite who *work up close*, unlike the vast majority of their military brethren.

The arts put you in that mode. The best ones stress the very qualities you'll need most out there: self-discipline, readiness for physical contact and engagement, speed, coordination of mind and body. And a sense of tactics.

But much depends on the arts you study. Your individual instructors, *sensei*, can be even more important. In the final analysis, however, it is up to you to adapt and refine what you find most useful in any system. You're building a savage skills composite.

So you might want to check out *shorin-ryu*. It's a real potential "one-punch kill" delivery system. No ballet here. *Shorin* is designed for speed and power.

Timing is crucial. In engaging, *shorin* fighters at first keep their distance. They maneuver, carefully watching and waiting, poised for an opening to deliver a sudden, straight, lightning-fast frontal assault.

The attack is hurled from medium to long range. Its commitment is total, designed to smash through blocks and parries and reach a vital point with a powerfully concentrated strike.

Follow-up punching may be applied. It should not be necessary; the initial main blow is designed to inflict enough damage that the hostile will collapse. If he doesn't, he gets hit again with another straight blitz attack. Or . . . the *shorin karateka* throws up a hard, focused block—so concentrated in power that it smashes the enemy's defenses, breaking bones in the opponent's lead arm. Then a smash to target.

All blows are carefully targeted. No wasted motion. All are hurled with magnum speed and power.

Shorin power is based less on muscular strength than on three other factors which are carefully developed: speed-focus-timing.

The basic punching and kicking technique achieves its power by concentrating maximum force at the moment

and point of impact. That means speed. Greater speed simply means more power. The *karateka* hurls a blow traveling forty-three feet per second with an impact of fifteen hundred pounds.

Timing refers to the attacker's ability to focus his resources as well as to the precise moment the enemy is most vulnerable. It is the ability to transfer body power to the target on instant command. It requires instantaneous coordination. In a flash the mind mobilizes the body, focuses it, and hurls power at the exact target.

An aspect of *shorin-ryu* appealing to those of us who seek only to adapt and add its techniques to a skills composite: *shorin* masters, *sensei*, believe that expertise in a few basic techniques is the key to combat expertise. *Shorin* students don't dissipate the learning effort on practicing intricate but nonfunctional *kata*.

Another interesting feature: younger U.S. Army and Marine officers have recently been enthusiastically talking up a bold new strike-force strategy they call "maneuver warfare." The concept is so damn similar to *shorin-ryu* doctrine that it could have been written by one of its *sensei*.

And then there is *chi sao*, one of the most bizarre but effective of the arts. It's actually an advance or refinement of *wing chun*, itself a fine fighting system. What's special about *chi sao* for you is that it's uniquely adapted to *night fighting*. That's a capability you'll want to build up across the military spectrum.

The term *chi sao* means "sticky fingers" in Cantonese, referring to the system's unique technique of employing the hands as primary sensory organs. You "see" by touch.

The *chi sao* fighter uses his hands to detect, predict, and

even guide his opponent's movements. Swiftly changing hand patterns are applied to the opponent—both for combat intelligence and to wage aggressive blocking and punching action. The probing action exposes openings through which the fighter hurls smashing blows.

Fundamental to *chi sao* is the "gate" concept. That's the body's defense perimeter. The gate defends your body's personal space. *Chi sao* aims to bypass the gate, the natural perimeter, and go straight to the target area—while blocking the enemy from doing the same.

The trick relies on swift execution: cutting the time required to execute the attack is crucial to the technique. The hands themselves must also deliver power. So practitioners throw straight punches at close range. It's also a basic law of physics that a straight punch hits with more impact than an angled blow.

Chi sao is a very cerebral art which, ironically, aims at bypassing the brain in its execution. Most fighters go through a process beginning with observation or perception, then orientation and decision, followed by action or reaction. *Chi sao* students strive to go straight from observation to action. The hands, pawing and probing the enemy, develop an extreme sensitivity of their own, freeing the eyes for an overview of the situation.

Itself a composite, *chi sao* also utilizes the centerline concept: the imaginary line running down the middle of the body, fore and aft, to the waist, is the pivot of action. It is defended and attacked with maximum effort.

A less easily grasped *chi sao* objective is the attainment of *relaxed tension*. Students strive for tension without rigidity, for effortless action. Rigidity means slowness. If a

fighter must batter his way through enemy defenses it means loss of time and energy. Thus, the hands seek to sneak through or flow around the opponent's defenses.

Once through the gate, those hands strike with speed and power. At *chi sao*'s highest level, the hands themselves—freed from the mind—wage their own war.

One of the big things about this system is that it's even more effective by night. That brings up one reason so many black belts are helpless against street fighters. The karate guys train in clean, well-lighted places—but their precise *katas* and flashy flying kicks are worse than useless against a cannibal-type shock attacking them in a dark alley.

Whichever art you select, try for one with a minimum of stylized forms and mystique and a maximum of simple, clean hard blows. Its basic alignment should also parallel your chosen profession—meaning that it should mesh neatly with your overall life-style.

There's another system, loudly publicized but dimly understood, that meets those requirements.

Ninjutsu

That's right—modern *ninja*. Laugh if you want, compadre, but if you had *ninja* skills—the genuine thing—I could market you like Michael Jackson. Sadly, you don't. But you'd do well to study *ninjutsu with a view to its modern application*.

The ancient *ninja* were mercenaries; their doctrines reflect that fact. Classic *ninja* conflict was highly individualized: wars waged by one warlord's small combat teams or lone operatives against those of another. It was not only a combat style. It was also a philosophy and way of life.

Ninjutsu was a composite, blending and combining separate combat elements into a single pattern. The pattern always added up to *shock assault*.

The *ninja* were super-terrorists. They constantly employed deception, the unexpected, the blindingly swift attack, the strike out of the unknown.

The *ninja* would never fight on the enemy's terms. He would never fight when and where expected. He hit by day when all evidence suggested attack by night. He struck with diversionary or secondary thrusts to conceal the main assault. He pretended weakness when he was strong . . . and always, survival and retreat were as paramount in his planning as victory and attack. The *ninja* were not kamikaze types.

Even so, his way of life seemed to border on the suicidal. To society and the established order he was an outlaw. If captured, he was boiled alive. To his patrons he was both deniable and expendable. He could trust no one. But, as a system, it worked.

"The *ninja*," writes Stephen Hayes, probably the West's foremost expert on the classic *ninja*, "developed his system as an utilitarian and dependable method of accomplishing his objectives with the least amount of personal danger."

And in that the *ninja* contrasted vividly with the warrior samurai. The latter were the respectable conventional soldiery of that era. They were establishment; the *ninja* were rebel. The *ninja* were human predators. Samurai were gentlemen. The samurai practiced meditation; the *ninja* stressed constant and even superhuman awareness. The samurai took suicidal pride in their honor and reputation.

The *ninja* systematically exploited the myth of their demoniac reputation.

Those basic characteristics of the ancient *ninja* are about the only similarity between the ancient pros and the turkeys who are their modern counterparts. Yet, the similarity does exist. The *ninja* potential in modern mercs exists, however latent. For you, *ninjutsu* might be a revelation. You might find it to be doing what comes naturally.

And if the Rand Corporation's projections are correct, the world is in for an era of protracted conflict between ministates and semiofficial political groupings with their own miniarmies—virtually a replay on a global scale of the conditions in feudal Japan which spawned the *ninja*. And modern miniaturized technology is revolutionizing that ancient concept.

Can that *ninja* potential be reactivated?

For better or worse it's being done right now. *Warriors* magazine can tell you about it. And the same mercenary *ninja* qualifications are needed as in the old days. If you've a keen and alert mind, strong and agile body, and powerful motivation . . . then, Joe, you're modern *ninja* material.

As *Black Belt*, a fine martial arts mag that also covers the *ninja* scene, notes: "The art of *ninjutsu* is easily as much a way of thinking as it is a fighting style."

And although you're no *ninja*, trying to think like one may help keep you alive. You're going into a world every bit as hazardous as it was back in the day of the *ninja*—so you try to align your mental and physical defenses in symmetry with that environment. Here's how.

Your Hazardous Environment Mode

The following is subject, of course, to environmental modification. These recommendations are also intended to enhance your image projection as well as your physical survival.

—Be totally aware of self. No daydreaming. Your senses are constantly alert.

—Watch your posture. Stand tall, head up, shoulders back, belly in, arms relaxed at sides, chin slightly forward, center of body gravity in feet and legs—but relaxed, not rigid.

—Walk with smooth graceful stride, breathing rhythmically, your body movements relaxed and fluid, legs together in stride, move shoulders slightly but no unnecessary body turbulence. Every move your body makes should be purposeful.

—Be precise in movements. When you stand—stand. When you sit—sit. Don't droop or lounge.

—Manner should project self-assurance. Avoid body language that betrays inner turmoil. No shaky hands, no stiff shoulders and back, no quavering voice. Don't stumble or fumble.

—Maintain eye control. Don't avoid eye contact. No blinking or furtive glances. Watch potential opposition directly.

—Keep moving. That's right: if you're in an operational area, whether it's an entire country or a local neighborhood, do not linger. Stop just long enough to do what you came to do—no diversions, no wasted efforts or motions—and promptly return to base or a secure area.

—And don't hesitate to sprint for safety. Practice running like hell by:

Increasing length of your stride.

Increasing forward body lean.

Swinging arms forward and back for forward motion.

Lifting your knees higher.

Using weight lifting to build leg muscles.

Alternating sprints and jogs.

Practicing night running and running through broken terrain.

—Finally, experiment with and select whatever training discipline—particularly your chosen martial art—you're comfortable with and which you feel best helps you coordinate mind and body. Your objective should be to imprint the primal skills so deeply that your subconscious or autonomic nervous system takes over and implements them—even when your conscious self seems overwhelmed by fear, pain, and confusion.

But keep one thing up front in this regard: the foregoing are basically passive. They're designed to keep you alive and functional under stress. But they won't do the job by themselves. You're not being paid merely to survive. Just as your critics say, you're still essentially a hired gun. In the end, Joe Merc, it comes down to that. And you're dealing with people—on your side as well as the other—for whom the term *conflict resolution* is defined as spilling blood and making corpses.

Killing people is, of course, a science as well as business. When you feel you're ready mentally, it's time to get down

to cases on the subject. For openers, let's start at the most deliberately primitive level: contact combat.

Here's where you really earn your pay.

Section 2:

Contact Combat

One of the most curious developments of our times is the attempt to wed public relations—the hearts-and-minds business—to life-and-death conflict. You see this today in the lingering Central American struggle between the Nicaraguan contras and the Sandinistas. There, the marriage of the two strategies ended in failure and defeat for the side to which PR had become paramount. Even if President Reagan and the U.S. public don't yet know it, *that war is essentially over*. Our side lost, as usual.

Training focus in the contra camps was on *endurance*: vigorous exercise, climbing ropes, running up and down hills. *It was not on how to kill*. That was deemphasized—and in fact about the only training booklet available in the camps was on the Geneva Convention and the rules of war. Moreover, the truly lethal people in the contra ranks, the experienced combat leaders, were largely purged and sidelined by 1984. By 1986 the vast majority of the contras, officers and men alike, were ill-trained peasants. This was PR to please Congress, the media, the American public.

Now, the foremost characteristic of the Nicaraguan peasant is that he's excellent potential military material. He's tough. He's built for endurance. He can run up and down hills all day and night. He doesn't need endurance

training. He can walk the butt off any foreign adviser—including you, Joe—but *he does lack modern combat skills*. Those priorities were reversed by the PR men who really ran the contra struggle. The war was turned into a public relations exercise.

But that's not the real world of winners and losers. It's the winners who will write the history books—and that's the ultimate public relations.

What this means to you, compadre, is that you'll have to watch the PR aspects of whatever you do throughout your career. But never forget that power still blooms from the barrel of a gun. And what the world of revolution needs now is not more PR experts but people who can deliver precision strikes *on target*. It'll be your job to deliver power punches, not shadowboxing. Skip the knife slashes and hand cuts; you'll be into in-depth stabs. Not flesh wounds but mortal wounds. Not mere surprise. Shock!

Your best PR will be to close with the enemy in a blitz of speed and targeted violence. But keep it clean and simple, uncluttered, the way bayonet fighting used to be. . . .

Help Wanted: Warriors!

Principles:

A. Get the blade into the enemy. This is the main principle. Parrying the enemy's attack, smashing him with the butt of your rifle, and using proper form are all important. But they are actions taken to enable you to sink the blade. It is the blade that kills.

B. Be ruthless, vicious, and fast in your attack. Never

pause until you have won. Follow each movement with another in a constant attack cycle.

C. Seek vital areas, but don't wait for an opening—make one. The throat is the best target. The belly is good too. Your enemy will instinctively protect these areas. When he covers one, attack the other. If he succeeds in protecting both, go for his face, hands, or side with a slashing blade and cut your way to that vital area. A solid butt stroke in the groin will open his guard. Deliver it hard and close in for the kill.

D. Protect yourself. You can dodge and parry. Your rifle and bayonet make a good shield. But remember that the best protection you have is to strike the first blow and then follow through.

—Marine Corps manual

You won't be using bayonets. The point is that contact combat is built on the same principles—the four principles above. They are valid whether you attack with your bare hands, improvised weapons, blades, clubs . . . or use them as tactical principles in leading a techno-commando raid.

It's important that you understand your reason-for-being as a mercenary. *It is to be able to implement those four principles against the enemy.* That's what your logistics function comes down to, your intelligence, your training of your patron's troops—and your leading them into combat. Everything else is secondary and supportive to driving the point of that blade into the enemy. Your job is to preserve yourself and your patron and destroy the enemy.

That's a much too primitive point of view for your offi-

cial military counterparts—and another reason why patrons and intelligence services are turning to primitives like you. It's a bull market for you so-called "animals."

The question is, compadre, *are you* yourself sufficiently "ruthless, vicious, and fast" for that kind of combat. It's the sort of warfare best waged by warriors—not uniformed technicians and mechanics.

True warriors are in short supply these days. Few of us are really comfortable with contact combat. We prefer to lavish billions on arms technology designed to give us bulk and range. We prefer to keep our enemies at vast distances and throw heavy ordnance at them. Meanwhile, of course, the sneaky Petes on the other side creep below the threshold of our weapons strategy; they wage real wars with light miniaturized weaponry and cutthroat tactics.

Not to complain. It's good for business.

The market demand is for warriors—the kind of guys who can confront the face of battle as it has been since the dawn of history. Our consumers need the type of man who can look a stranger straight in the eye and chop his face in two with a battleaxe or broadsword. You may use a laser death beam instead—but you'd still be only a modern version of that same ancient warrior.

Modern man, particularly in the U.S. and Western Europe, is increasingly revolted by what contact combat is and represents. Other cultures and societies are less inhibited. But Western man has almost reached a point where he can't bring himself to use firearms, let alone battle-axes, even to save his own life.

The U.S. Army has done considerable research into the problem. One incredible statistic will indicate its enormity:

Only one fourth of all American fighting men, even in "highly motivated" units, actually use their arms in combat. This was the conclusion of distinguished Army historian General S.L.A. Marshall.

The nonfirers were not cowards, said Marshall, but were simply the products of Western culture. "The Army cannot unmake [Western man]," he wrote in *Men Against Fire*.

It must reckon with the fact that he comes from a civilization in which aggression, connected with the taking of life, is prohibited and unacceptable. The teaching and ideals of that civilization are against killing, against taking advantage. The fear of aggression has been expressed to him so strongly and absorbed by him so deeply—practically with his mother's milk—that it is part of his normal makeup. This is his greatest handicap when he enters combat. It stays his trigger finger even though he is hardly conscious there is a restraint on him.

Marshall's thesis throughout his latter professional career was that few of us are natural warriors—and those who are should be utilized to the maximum. He proposed restructuring the army into fire teams built around natural fighters. The concept was supported by the Army's own research as well as experience. It was no use. General Motors, not General Marshall, prevailed.

Marshall was not alone in warning that warfare's past and present were coming full circle. In his text on what he calls *Modern Warfare*, Colonel Roger Trinquier, legendary commander of the French paras, also predicted that war will once again return to contact combat. Look at real

warfare in the modern world, said Trinquier, and prepare for combat between men, not machines.

The vast conscript armies of the great wars are obsolete, Trinquier warned. Modern warriors can expect to engage in direct physical contact with the enemy—in contrast to the long-range ordnance exchanges for which the West is preparing. Heavy weaponry will be replaced by swift, powerful thrusts by small units making maximum use of intelligence and deception.

Trinquier's prediction proved to be more wishful thinking than fact. Even as he was urging adoption of his ancient-modern warriors doctrine, the U.S. Army was waddling off, laden with machinery, to the Vietnam debacle.

Study Marshall and Trinquier. A fairly thorough immersion in one or two well-chosen martial arts will also help. Because your prime function in warfare will be like contact karate: combat at short range, hard, fast, and linear. It requires the mentality of the warrior. The skills of close combat will also enable you to use to best advantage the splendid new combat technology now available to you—the modern equivalent of those battle-axes and broadswords.

I mentioned earlier there had been an almost inadvertent breakthrough in the type of weaponry ideally adapted to the warrior and those tiny fire teams of which Marshall dreamed. This technological revolution is still in its infancy. Just down the road are man-portable sonic weapons, "death beams," delivery systems for powerful minipackages of explosives.

But don't worry about them at this point. Let's concentrate now on transforming you from a soldier into warrior

—and don't be embarrassed by that word—otherwise that fancy gear won't do you or your side a damn bit of good.

Start with the basic blow.

The Basic Blow

The straight punch is basic to unarmed combat. In knife fighting it's the stab. Both strikes should be delivered in almost identical fashion.

Punching is also basic in this sense: You learn to wield your hands as weapons and you will easily adapt to hand weapons. And your hands are weapons—the only ones you'll always have with you and that cannot be taken away. Even so, almost any improvised weapon is better than the human hand alone—and rarely will you be in a situation where improvisation is entirely impossible.

As in all weapons systems, punching has two key components: delivery and targeting.

For delivery, strike with maximum effort along the shortest, most direct route to the target. The shortest line between two points means economy of time and motion, more impact, more penetrating power.

Best frontal targets: his temple, nose, upper lip (acutely vulnerable nerve concentration), windpipe, and lower belly. Strikes to the rear: base of the skull, back of the neck, base of the spine. Flank attacks: side of the neck (carotid), ears, the point just below the ear (pressed hard or punched with extended knuckle).

Theoretically, a single hand blow to those targets—delivered with speed, power, and precision—should neutralize any opponent. That seldom happens, of course. Apart

from often flawed delivery and targeting, it must be recognized that the human hand is a fragile instrument.

Which is why I emphasize improvisation. The hand's striking power is sharply enhanced if it strikes with an object that pierces—a ballpoint, say—or lends it weight and mass—perhaps a heavy ashtray—and targeting is frequently made easier.

And with improvised weaponry you won't bust that precious hand.

Improvised Weaponry

This might be more aptly entitled "Creative Weaponry." Keep up front the fact that the weapons potential in the world around you is limited only by your awareness and imagination. Whether it be a handful of sand or explosives made from a cow-manure base, the resources are there.

And you're an independent. That means you can never be sure where your next battle-ax or broadsword is coming from. You have to think constantly in terms of defending yourself with whatever is at hand.

The specifics of improvisation are available in dozens of manuals on the subject—but those books won't be there when you suddenly are confronted with an improvisation crisis. However, you can condition yourself to think creative weaponry. Enter a room and run through little mental drills in adapting its contents to combat. Get accustomed to instinctively inventorying weapons potential.

You should, of course, know what to look for. Some of the more obvious items: screwdrivers, plastic letter openers, canes, ballpoint pens, umbrellas, chairs, keys, hardcover books, rolled-up magazines, lightbulbs, hard-

wood chopsticks, fingernail scissors, coins, shoelaces, neckties . . . and a thousand other items.

There's an ex-Marine out somewhere wandering the world, armed with a pair of chopsticks. He once gouged out a guerrilla's eyes with a pair of hardwood chopsticks—and thereby saved his life. Now he carries a beautiful pair made of steel and ivory, lethal as icepicks, and he knows how to use them.

In a similar vein there are people in the business who practice mental visualization of improvised weaponry tactics. You sit down to eat with those guys and you know they're visually applying their knives and forks to the unsuspecting guy across the table or across the room. Should they use the table knife on him after they throw the salt and pepper in his face? Or just the fork? Or both at once? Maybe first the cup of hot coffee in his face, then the salt and pepper. The guy is big but looks slow and a little sleepy; maybe hit him with a chair instead. And now where are the exits . . . ?

There really are people who do that. Mike Echanis was one. That's carrying it a little far, perhaps, but it's not a bad idea to practice such situations in your daily life—as long as you don't get carried away.

Use improvisation much as you would any other combat system.

First, train and adapt your moves into a system. Keep mobile, guard your centerline, try to break through your enemy's natural defense perimeter around his body, strike for vulnerable areas. Use preemptive strikes—meaning don't be afraid to initiate action—and employ diversionary maneuvers or blows, but never hit just to be hitting. With

puncture weapons—chopsticks, umbrellas, pens—stab and don't slash, and strike with your improvised weapon with as much flair, speed, and precision as if it were a hand-tooled instrument.

Here's an example—a very special example, but little known and rarely employed—which I commend to you.

Classic Improvisation

SCENE: Two lean, rock-hard Marine gunnery sergeants accompanied by the company bugler go to a waterfront dive—which could be located in any slatternly city from Shanghai to San Diego—where a young Marine had been knifed the previous night. The three Marines pause outside the door.

The two gunnies unsling their wide leather belts with the big, heavy buckles. They wrap the strap ends around their fists. The kid bugler throws back his shoulders, raises the bugle, and blasts out the call to "Attention!"

The sergeants push open the doors. They stroll inside. The dump is jammed with startled waterfront scum.

"You pieces of shit will come to attention when a Marine enters," says one gunnery sergeant.

Then, swinging those deadly black belts and gold buckles, the two sergeants proceed to execute the classical maneuver technically known as "cleaning out the joint." Knives, fists, feet, chairs, broken bottles, clubs, even a pistol . . . all are brought to bear against the Marines. But those sharpened buckles cut down the opposition and demolish the place.

They are gone within minutes. The bloody shambles

they leave behind attests that those flying belts can be as barbaric and lethal as battle-axes.

Now that we are all civilized, that sort of thing no longer takes place, of course. Nevertheless, the Marines' technique can be equally applicable today. After all, if you wear trousers and use a belt you are never really unarmed. Just wear the right kind of belt and buckle and know how to use them. However, to wield your belt effectively, you do need a special quality.

You've got to have a certain style, spirit, panache, elan, flair, plus plain steel balls, to wield effectively any improvised weapon. That is the secret to transforming a belt or any other commonplace item into an instrument of magnificent violence.

To give you that self-confidence and dynamism, you need practice. Lots of practice, as with any other weapon. But it's something you can easily work out on your own. Concentrate and you'll soon be able to swing the thing and tear big chunks out of trees or furniture or human heads.

Tip: Cut your initial windup phase to a minimum. Train yourself to lash out from point zero. *Never go into a set position prior to attack.* That's one of the grave flaws of many of the martial arts. Learn to strike while in motion.

But keep one thing up front regarding both bare-hand fighting and improvisation: You're still no match against a guy with real weapons who knows how to use them. An expert knife fighter will take out the other two types every time.

Bladesmanship

Maybe a half-million years ago a caveman tumbled to the fact that a shard of sharp, or sharpened, obsidian made a dandy thing with which to terminate the guy in the cave next door—and the science and technology of warfare took a great leap forward.

A blade is still our basic weapon. It best exemplifies the "ruthless, vicious, and fast" essentials of contact combat. Nothing quite equals the primitive thrill of closing with the enemy, naked knife in hand, and working the blade deep into flesh and muscle. *And a warrior adept at the savage skills is useful to have around in almost any form of warfare.*

In our environment, our violent lands, skill with a blade will win you acceptance you'd never get if you came in, say, as the world's foremost expert on submarine guidance systems. And you know what I told you about acceptance. Attain some mastery of contact combat—you'll be respected as lethal people wherever or whatever the conflict. A bladesman's skill and mentality will make you a modern warrior.

So we'll start with blades. As with all other tactics and techniques mentioned in this manual, develop each into a system—which in turn is to be adapted into a single unified contact combat doctrine. See the pattern—not the pieces.

There are several knife-fighting doctrines. The overwhelming favorite in the States is the Biddle system, although it has been modified over the years and the Biddle name has disappeared into history. But all the variations are basically Biddle, named for Anthony Drexel Biddle, who popularized it shortly before World War II.

Biddle was an eccentric socialite millionaire and skilled swordsman. His theory was that he could adapt techniques from the fencing salons of Europe to combat-knife work. Biddle had excellent Marine Corps connections and the Corps published as an official text his treatise on knife fighting—the first time knife fighting was treated as a serious military subject. The system has perpetuated itself ever since.

Which is weird—because the Biddle system simply doesn't work. His fancy fencing techniques just don't adapt to real knife-fighting. Like so many official close-combat training systems, it is predicated on a series of movements by both the hero and the bad guy. It actually requires cooperation on both sides for it to function properly—so forget it. In fact, avoid any close combat system requiring joint sequence of movement.

Then there is the Filipino system, a wide range of techniques collectively known as *esgrima*. It works . . . devastatingly. I once saw a little Filipino *esgrima* master literally disembowel a very large knife-wielding American sailor in two lightning strokes.

Don't fool with Filipinos, Joe, least of all *esgrima* types. But *esgrima* is not for you.

Esgrima is the sort of thing you have to master or not attempt at all. No in-between. It's practically a cult. And you don't have time to involve yourself in something so complex, at the expense of other skills.

In fact, you don't need any kind of *institutionalized* knife training. You need to learn to stab. And the best stabbing knife is a dagger. That means the Sykes-Fairbairn or some-

thing similar. Focus on one simple knife attack system. That's all you'll need.

Let's now examine your best type of stabbing weapon and a realistic scenario of how you use it most effectively.

The Cobra Strike

"In close quarters fighting there is no more deadly weapon than the knife," wrote the great W. E. Fairbairn. "An entirely unarmed man has no certain defense against it and, further, merely flashing the blade is frequently enough to strike fear into your opponent. . . ."

Fairbairn was developing his superb commando knife and doctrine at about the same time Drexel Biddle was getting himself stabbed by kid Marines. Fairbairn, his knife and doctrine have fallen into disrepute; Biddle's nonsense incredibly endures.

Much of the controversy centers on the Fairbairn knife. The slender and even delicate blade is too prone to snap, say critics. It is not a slash weapon, they add. And the world has been flooded with cheap copies of the Fairbairn original.

There is much truth to the criticism.

The Fairbairn is slender and delicate. It is no good as a survival tool—unless killing people means survival. It is not—God forbid!—a throwing knife. Nor is it designed to slash; the Fairbairn is designed for deep thrusts. It is a precision instrument designed to kill.

It is ideal for body stabs—thrusts through skin, tissue, and fat right into the heart of the matter. Fairbairn also intended his blade to stab through the ears and, particu-

larly, the throat. But the Fairbairn is obviously not designed to batter its way through the rib cage.

In short, the Fairbairn was magnificently designed for the job it was intended to do—by someone who knew what he was doing. It is not “GI-proof.” The knife must be wielded by professionals.

A pro strikes with little or no advance warning. There is no posturing. No fencing. You probably won't even see his knife. He's holding it by the handle flat against the back of his forearm. When he lunges, his move is so fast it blurs into a single action.

He strikes from no set position. The hostile's hand suddenly sprouts steel as he flips it over and locks it into position while in motion. Invariably, he lunges first for the belly. The belly thrust itself can kill. Besides the physical damage, the body's nervous system will blow fuses when the blade strikes the nerve centers concentrated there. The body goes into immediate shock. Breathing stops. The heart may follow.

But the pro *doesn't stop* stabbing. His blade strikes again and again, driven rapid-fire into the belly. Then he goes for the throat. The neck is the body's most vulnerable area. Here, tightly packaged, are the vital links between body and head, between life and death. . . .

The victim is now dead. Even so, some of our Third Worlders refuse to accept at this point that the party is over. They keep stabbing. The body becomes piccalilli, chopped meat.

There is a strong element of the berserker in some knife fighters. They go a little crazy. Best defense, of course, is to give him a faceful of bullets. Second, run like hell. Third,

defend yourself with knife, club, or similar weapon. Finally, barehanded disarming. The last two options are distinctly unpleasant.

Of course, Joe, you can always “take the Biddle position,” go into “on guard” and wonder how you're going to deliver a hand cut against that blur of oncoming blade. If you do . . . you deserve what's going to happen.

Notes on Knives

Start by selecting the knife that's right for you. In fact, familiarize yourself with several types of knives. I like the Fairbairn. Gerbers and Randalls are also excellent. Forget custom-made knives; they're ridiculously expensive. Also, don't make a cult out of your weaponry. They are tools; nothing more.

The Fairbairn is not the knife for all people, places, and seasons. It's strictly a combat knife. You're better off with something smaller for urban self-defense. Most boot knives are very good—but I don't want to have to lecture you about the perils of “carrying concealed weapons” in our “civilized” society.

Never rely on a knife as your primary weapon. You'll probably be outgunned. For defense against knives, Fairbairn's old tactic of holding the hostile at bay with a light chair or stool is to be preferred to almost any other unarmed technique—if you have a chair or stool. It's consumer tested—and it works. The oldie about draping a coat over your left arm as defense won't even give pause to a skilled bladesman. Instead—best of all—exercise extreme retrograde mobility, meaning RUN!

In attack you can't improve on the cobra-strike outlined.

It has surprise, speed, power, and precision. And don't forget follow-up thrusts. Best target is just below the rib cage, your blade angled very slightly upward. And get close to the guy before you strike. No cocking action, no downward glances at your knife arm, no advance signals—just strike!

A final note on knives: Fairbairn designed his blade for the classic employment of knives in wartime: silently taking out sentries. But have no illusions about going head to head with a guy with a gun. . . .

Section 3:

Merc Gunnery

"A true soldier loves a gun as an Arab loves a horse," says SOF maestro Hilaire du Berrier. "Guns are power. . . ."

And, of course, I agree—up to a point. Or perhaps the point is that du Berrier's active career was back in the days before metal detectors were installed at airport boarding gates. In any case, you'll probably have to get new guns for each new contract. You may love your gun—but be prepared to love it and lose it.

You'll lose your personal arms through attrition, capture, confiscation, theft, damage or just plain losing—not to mention that you'll do most of your distance travel by plane and moving your weaponry around is a major hassle. You'll find, too, that your favorite piece may catch the eye of your jefe or one of his cohorts. So he "borrows" it. A fine weapon is a status symbol in those countries and the finer the weapon the more likely you'll lose it through begging, borrowing,

or stealing. Safeguard your weapon as best you can—but expect the worst and be on the lookout for instant substitutes.

And, of course, the range of your potential weaponry is constantly expanding. To keep current, and for definitive reference, review the annual *Jane's Infantry Weapons* and *Brassey's Infantry Weapons of the World*. Main difference between the two is that *Jane's* tilts toward the arms industry and government; *Brassey's* is more user oriented.

However, both books depend heavily on government and industry and are not out to antagonize either of them. So you'll find very little critical product evaluation. For that you turn to the military and weapons magazines. You'll also find plenty of people in the business willing to talk weapons—which is possibly even better, as long as it's understood that you'll get volleys of overheated BS right along with real information. But that goes with the job. You're constantly screening out precious little nuggets of fact.

Glance through *Jane's* and *Brassey's* and you'll note that the once-stalled development of man-portable, shoulder-fired weapons systems is once again moving forward fast. They aren't *basic* merc gunnery, of course, but those systems are looming ever larger in your wars.

Two of the oldest such weapons systems out there are still among the best. One is the old Blowpipe. It's produced by Short Brothers, Limited, of Belfast, Northern Ireland, the aircraft manufacturer. The Blowpipe is simple and efficient, able to knock out planes up to six thousand feet.

The Shorts system's better-known Soviet counterpart is the even older—and less efficient—SAM-7, a triumph of

superbly simple, even primitive, missile weaponry. Enormous quantities of the SAM-7 have been distributed worldwide. What is surprising is that it's not been more widely used. The SAM-7 heat-guided missile is effective against fairly slow, low-flying aircraft.

In antiarmor the Soviet RPG-7 is the classic—but it's now being upstaged by a new generation of more versatile Western weaponry—notably the new Belgian products. Possibly one of the best now on the market is the Armbrust 300 disposable launcher. The system, weighing four to eight kilos, has models for use against personnel as well as armor. Up to six rounds of the 80-mm missile can be carried per man. What is particularly interesting about the Armbrust is that smoke, noise, and flash have virtually been eliminated—making it particularly attractive for your kind of action.

Even U.S. man-portable missilery—after years of futzing around with inferior products such as the Dragon—is finally getting set for a quantum leap into the present, if not the future. But don't wait for that. You can take it as gospel that any infantry weapon produced anywhere by anybody will eventually filter out to your level. They can be had. And what you're going to be getting amounts to an immensely important historical shift.

Personal weaponry—arms and ammo you can carry and shoot—is being revolutionized. You yourself, Joe, can take out enemy armor, aircraft, bunkers, whole buildings containing, perhaps, whole roomfuls of officials. *Portable assault weapons are now being developed at a faster pace than are the defensive systems needed to repel them.*

For the world, this is a mixed blessing: good news for

rebels, a disastrous trend for forces defending the established order. For you, Joe Merc, it means you've gotta stop thinking in terms of defending the status quo and get into attack systems. That's your natural role anyway.

Even so, your *basic* field weapons will be what is currently available to most infantrymen in a reasonably equipped army. It's how you use those weapons that is the important thing.

Your Basic Weapons

You'll find there's not much demand for your services, Joe, out on the open spaces. Nobody needs you on the plains of Western Europe or the deserts of North Africa. Leave that to the regulars.

Your turf is where it's always been: jungle country, hill country—and built-up areas and cities. That's where your opposite numbers, the guerrillas and terrorists, also flourish. And it's where the regulars are least effective.

Same with weaponry. Forget tanks, artillery, all the heavy machinery of war. In your kind of war, in your kind of terrain, you need light weapons with heavy firepower. You'll be into a series of *raids* and *ambushes* and you'll arm yourself accordingly. Your most important contribution, defensively and offensively, will be in those parallel tactics in which the Western military have such a dismal record.

That means, however, you'll seldom be able to confront your enemy directly. With one exception, your basic weapons will lack range. (The exception is the sniper rifle—that underused but extremely lethal piece of ordnance.) So

you've got to rely on mobility, the oblique attack—and never going into fixed positions.

If you slug it out with the enemy on his natural defense perimeter—whether it be personal combat or as in the anti-Sandinista war in Nicaragua—you're once again going to be a loser. Get through his perimeter. Or back from it. But if you're tired of defeats, do what the anti-Sandinistas are *not* allowed to do: punch straight through or around the perimeter and strike him where it hurts most. Hit the center—and then move back out as fast as you went in.

And for that you need light, man-portable weaponry. Your basics are assault rifles and SMGs. There are at least three other infantry weapons you may need to support your light autos: grenade launchers, light mortars, and light machine-guns. A recoilless rifle would also be lovely. Here's the problem: They are a bit too bulky for maximum mobility—and they have voracious appetites. Ammo means more weight . . . so, initially at least, let's limit ourselves to basic ARs and SMGs—while recognizing we've sacrificed heavy hitting for mobility.

Assault rifles have, as you know, replaced semiauto weapons as basic infantry weapons (although there are still plenty of old M1's and other World War II vintage rifles around). The ARs have an effective range of about 250 yards—which is ample if you stick to your proper terrain and tactics. The ARs that you are most likely to encounter are the M16, the Soviet AK in various incarnations, Belgium's FN family, West Germany HK products, particularly the G3; and, to a lesser extent, Israel's Galil. And, of course, the M2 carbine.

We could sit around and argue the relative merits of the above for the rest of this manual. Let's not. Do that on your own time. For what it's worth, if there were a consensus of your peers and local counterparts—which there isn't—it would probably be fairly close to something like this:

M16. Despite loudly voiced reservations, it's probably still the world's best all-around assault rifle. Maybe.

The Kalashnikovs. The AK family is neck and neck with the 16's in popularity—and probably a little ahead.

The Belgian FN FAL models. Good . . . but not well adapted to heavy Third World terrain and light physiques. More a tribute to FN's demon salesmanship than to craftsmanship.

HK's G3. Same as for the FN products.

The Galils. Many fine features—but few seem comfortable with its hybrid design.

M2 automatic carbine. You'll find them where you're going, wherever that may be. Amazingly popular, despite limited range, accuracy, and power. However, the real pros seldom use them.

New assault rifles are flooding the world. The Spaniards and Swiss are producing fine ARs. So are the Czechs with their vz.58V. The Austrians are coming on the market with rifles of radical new design. The British and Swedes are also into new AR design. . . . And so it goes.

Just focus initially on the six systems above. And give special attention to the first and second pieces—and the last; those three are Third World favorites, whatever their relative merits. They are the staples of guerrilla warfare worldwide, no matter where the war and what the terrain.

Terrain and Weaponry

Guerrilla country is hell on weapons. Problems with finding the best weapons for the terrain is another constant. Add to that the fact that you've got to think in terms of using weapons best adaptable not only to the terrain but also to your tactical mission.

But as always, in your kind of war, you'll settle for what you have or can get; rarely will you have the option of picking and choosing your hardware as casually as a golfer selecting clubs out of a golf bag. However, a few guidelines are in order.

Longer ranges and more accuracy are more important, naturally, in open country than in forested areas. In deep jungle you may be eyeball to eyeball with the enemy before either is aware of the other. For working up close like that, SMGs and even shotguns are ideal. However, you and the bad guys have to be really damn close before shotgun and light auto fire is effective in jungle combat. The heavy foliage has an amazing capacity to deflect and just absorb light-caliber fire. An M2 carbine, for instance, is just not adequate for a firefight in thick foliage.

Having said that, I hasten to point out that jungle combat often takes place in relatively open areas. Both sides tend to break the rules and stick to the fringes of roads, farmland, clearings, built-up areas, and streams. Often, too, you'll find jungle country suddenly changes into open turf. Thick tropical foliage may abruptly give way to savannah country. Or mountains. The actual terrain is often not what you expect.

Example: Contrary to the impression conveyed by the media, there's no real jungle anywhere in El Salvador. The

closest thing to it is some swampy coastline along the south coast. Guerrilla operations areas are in fairly densely populated rural country. The guerrilla base areas along the Honduran border are fairly rugged—but those bleak hills certainly aren't jungle. In fact, bandit country in the north-east and around Lake Güija looks remarkably like the deserty Camp Pendleton area in southern California.

The Honduran-Nicaraguan border is another example. The eastern two thirds of the border country is as thoroughly unpleasant a land as you'll find north of Panama's Darien jungle. But inside Nicaragua, in the Segovias, the western hill country where anti-Sandinista units are still operating, the scene is entirely different. Around Estelí and Jinotega the hill country looks like the piney-wooded slopes of the lower Rockies—and at night it gets just as cold and miserable.

But whatever the terrain, you'll have to make do with the weapons and gear you have available. You're fortunate in that most of the basic weapons you'll probably have on hand lend themselves, overall, to combat in both rugged terrain and built-up areas. But you stay away from the wide open spaces. Concentrate on the AK and M16 systems and stick to your proper turf.

Merc Rapid-Fire

The inventor of the Ingram MAC-10/11 is supposed to have said that he designed his weapon "to wipe out a roomful of very surprised colonels."

That kind of action is precisely what's lacking in your wars. For forty years your patrons—and their late predecessors—have been nibbling around the fringes of their

guerrilla/terrorist enemies and official sponsors. What they need—and they know it—is people and weaponry to work beyond the fringes, inside the other guy's perimeter. They want to hit the center. They want a real victory. They want to hit that roomful of “very surprised colonels.”

Trouble is . . . they still don't know how to find and fix that room—and they sure as hell seldom achieve surprise. They're going to hire you to figure out what they've been doing wrong.

They don't need you to toil away with the troops on mountaintops or deep in the jungled boonies. Plenty of people can do that. They want you for action fast, intense, and decisive. You'll be working close. At least half your strikes will be by night . . . but you'll hit with blinding speed whether daylight or dark. And when you need firepower you'll want it in torrents. Ruggedness is not tops on your weapons priorities. You'll want pieces that'll spew death like a garden hose.

You are fortunate in that there are a whole range of excellent SMGs like the Ingram and Uzi on the market—and more coming all the time. As you transit up the scale of Third World warfare to urban commando action, you leave behind rugged firepower and guerrilla wars of attrition. You move into targeting—and for that you don't need range. You need lethal little toys like the KG-9.

Saying that will draw a barrage of criticism from people who know only one thing about the KG-9 (or KG-99, as it's also called) and that is that it's part plastic. So what? It works. And it's highly reliable. A true machine pistol, the KG-9 is very concealable even with suppressor and flash-hider. Cyclic rate about 640 rounds per minute.

This weapon is a favorite, along with the MAC-10, of guerrilla gangsters of the cocaine persuasion. It's proved its lethality in hosing down roomfuls of cocaine competitors from Miami to Medellín. It deserves a place on your shopping list—strictly for urban action—just behind the Ingrams but ahead of the famed Uzi.

The old Czech V61 Skorpion is a little beauty and one of the most sought-after weapons—by terrorists and gangsters alike—in the world today. Only 10.62 inches long with stock folded, it was the prototype of most machine-pistol types now on the market—but none have quite been able to achieve the same package.

It fires .32 ACP at 750 rpm, operating full or semiautomatic from the closed-bolt position. This enhances relative stability. That, plus open rear sight and fine trigger, gives the piece excellent accuracy. And very portable, concealable, with light recoil.

The Skorpion lends itself superbly to suppressors and is still one of the most silenced weapons on the market. Infrared scopes designed for the Skorpion are available. Both are becoming key features in current SMG development.

When you go up against a guy porting a Skorpion, chances are you've encountered a real pro. Italian terrorists trained with it in Czechoslovakia, then brought Skorpions back to Italy. From there they spread throughout Europe, then—to a limited extent—worldwide. Skorpions are reportedly no longer manufactured and are now something of a status symbol.

The Skorpion and the M2 carbine are the oldest favorites. Two newcomers to the market are British and Brazilian SMGs. Both come with integral suppressors and op-

tional night-vision sights. One is the superb Sterling-Patchett of hallowed British ancestry. The other is the brand-new Brazilian Uru. The latter has no antecedents and has yet to be combat tested. Experts claim, however, that the Uru may well become a hot item on tomorrow's GW market. The Sterling is assured of a world market.

The whole field of auto fire is still in a state of flux as the multiple weapons systems cross-breed at a furious rate. It's a buyer's market, at least in product range. One might say that your choice of rapid-fire weaponry will probably be dictated by (1) availability, (2) personal preference, and (3) your budget. The "personal preference" category will also probably reflect what kind of kickback you or your boss arranges with the supplier.

Unless you specialize, don't spend excessive time trying to familiarize yourself with all this ordnance. Master the basics of the military staples previously listed; do that and you'll be able to adjust fairly easily to less-familiar types as they turn up. And you can expect to encounter all kinds of ballistic exotica. The amount and variety of firepower floating around Third World wars is staggering.

Old Mausers, for instance, still abound in the world's backwood conflicts. In China, for instance, the first pistol I ever carried was a Mauser machine pistol—complete with wooden holster which doubled as an attachable stock—and found it an awkward but devastating weapon. The piece was ancient, one of many thousands marketed in China around the turn of the century and passed from army to army. And they're still out there.

One of the curiosities of world conflict is the timidity of the world's armies and arms makers regarding snipers and

sniper rifles. In fact, except for HK's new PSG-1, there is no real sniper rifle on the market. What we do have are such modified creations as the U.S. M21 and fancy CSRS countersniper rifle system, the latter basically a Remington. There are rumors that genuine sniper systems are being developed for production.

Finally, a plug for what I consider the best all-around SMG on the market: HK's MP5-A3, even though it was directly sired from HK's wretched G3 assault rifle. It was German terrorists who first popularized the MP5. Now it's gone global. But it's ridiculously expensive—and, unlike the regulars, the cost of weapons will probably be the single most decisive factor in your acquisitions.

Backup Weapons

An Italian veteran of the Red Brigades turned up in Managua recently and became friendly with a young American paramilitary. The American was double gaited in the sense that he was associated both with the Sandinistas and the anti-Sandinistas.

The Italian easily topped that. Like many—in fact, now probably most—of his breed, he was triple gaited: simultaneously a dope trafficker, terrorist, and Communist government operative.

But our main interest here is his weaponry. His main piece, he said, was the beloved Skorpion. Alas, in Nicaragua he had to settle for an Uzi. For backup he had a .25-caliber pistol strapped to his ankle—plus, usually, a heavier pistol tucked in his belt. And he always carried an attaché case containing, among other things, ammo for the

three firearms, a long switchblade, and a Dutch V40 hand grenade.

That's ridiculous. In an emergency nobody has time to fool around with all that gear.

But you do need a backup weapon. Always. And that doesn't include improvisations like steel-tipped umbrellas or a mass of keys on a chain. They can be useful, true, but your probable opponents will be carrying auto weapons—not umbrellas.

Bear in mind, too, that a pistol is not an attack weapon. It's defensive. That's a pistol's designed role. Another thing: The people you're most likely to go up against will probably be carrying rapid-fire—not pistols. Our countries are now civilized. They've leapt from machetes to machine guns. Combatants now use SMGs in situations where you're accustomed to think in terms of pistols.

But you will need a pistol as backup weapon. By now you should be reasonably familiar with the various reasons your main piece will be nonfunctional or nonexistent at crucial times. Equally important, there may be times when the occasion calls for only a very light, compact piece. Concealability is a major factor, particularly in the tropics where short-sleeved shirts are the working norm.

One professional of my acquaintance does it this way: He carries three pistols when he wears a jacket: a .45 in a shoulder holster, a .38 in his waistband, and a .25 in an ankle holster. With a loose shirt worn outside the trousers, a *guayabera*, he retains his .38 and ankle gun. Down to a T-shirt, he still has his little .25. . . .

But for your purposes, one backup pistol is probably sufficient. There are a number of such pieces on the mar-

ket. Some, like the Detonics .45, are damn expensive. Other fine weapons of this type include the ASP 9mm, Walther PPKS .380, Mauser HSc .380, OMC .380 backup, and several of the smaller Berettas.

And don't forget—Your backup needs as much tender loving care as your main weapon. Same for its ammo. Dis-use for a gun is as bad as overuse.

Final note: Ankle holsters are no novelty where you're going. It's gotten so that guys don't dare scratch their ankles or tie their shoes in public anymore; makes people nervous. That's one reason why boot knives won't be very popular, either, in your tropical operational area. You bend over . . . and guns go bang before your hand gets lower than your knee. Ask the late ankle gunner, Ricardo "Monkey" Morales.

But most boot knives are fine blades. And useful to supplement your backup. But do *not* wear them in your boot. Apart from the obvious danger, in any prisoner situation—even a casual jailing—civilians and military alike will unerringly dive straight for those lovely boots of yours. They're considered real goodies out there.

What you do is *strap your boot knife, hilt down, to your left forearm*—if you're right handed—and your captors or other hostiles might just miss it as they go for your ankles and feet. And yes, Joe, a long-sleeved shirt does go with this ensemble.

Ammo Awareness

Everybody talks guns. Only a few pros seem to realize you have to consider ammo just as carefully. A merc usu-

ally is into on-the-job scrounging for guns. It's the same with ammo—only worse.

You want an ammo supply that is available, reliable, and plentiful. Invariably, it is none of the above.

What that means is that you check your ammo supply before selecting weapons—particularly your basic weapon.

It also means you have to be a fanatic about hoarding ammo and being always on the alert for new sources. People are not going to be handing you whole bandoliers of the stuff; you're not in the U.S. Army. And don't get hysterical if your Third World patron rations out rounds bullet by bullet to you and your men.

Ammo is expensive! Moreover, your patron's ordnance officer has probably cut a deal with those bastardly suppliers in Brussels: they ship him fifteen hundred cases of ammo instead of the contracted two thousand and split the cost of the difference with the officer. Also, ammo accountability may be politically motivated. The local top honcho may literally not trust his own troops to have loaded rifles. Very common.

So you'll probably have to have a heart-to-heart talk with your fearful leader about the ridiculous ammo situation. You cannot, you tell him, turn those raggedy-assed recruits into the elite strike force you're being paid to shape up without plenty of practice firing. Hell, most of them haven't even zeroed in those old rifles. . . .

He's probably already agreed with your argument that your planned strike force is his key to survival and has promised you a free hand in that regard. He wants that force. He'll come through with what you want. He just has to be prodded—constantly.

But even if you have plenty of ammo on hand—test it! The tropics does strange things to ammo and guns. Both may have been hoarded and unused in some warehouse for years.

Second only to ammo availability, present and future, weight should be considered in your planning. You yourself, as well as your men, may have to carry it for long periods. Ammo is heavy—an obvious fact frequently overlooked by people who should know better.

I've even seen trained Marxist guerrillas bogged down in the boonies by sheer weight of the ammo they carried. Most of those guerrillas simply dumped those precious bullets. For them, and for you, mobility has to have priority. That same factor applies, of course, to your weapons selection.

Think, too, in terms of international resupply. That applies to both arms and ammo. Your present resupply system may be subject or vulnerable to hostile outside pressures—and probably is. The big intelligence services influence or control the world's major arms dealers. If they're seriously out to break your side they will (1) see to it you're resupplied with defective arms and ammo, or (2) arrange to have you cut off completely.

And don't think that doesn't happen or can't be done. It does and is—right now.

What can you do about it? Lay in as much reserve as your resources allow and develop alternate sources of supply through brokers with connections to small, independent suppliers. You'll find those sources in Argentina, Brazil, Taiwan, Singapore, and Israel. Not to worry. By the

time you're into weapons procurement, you'll know who to see and where to look. But it'll cost you.

We're escalating again—but take with you the basics and principles you've acquired at entry level. They'll have direct application on a broader but—I hope—equally focused scale. Let me remind you again: if you have a conventional military mind-set, get rid of it. Shed it before you set foot overseas. “No more Vietnams.”

You must offer skills, experience, and motivation the locals lack. You'll also need less tangible qualities. I don't particularly like the term, but possession of innate “killer instincts” would be a professional plus—as long as they're carefully channeled. After all, you'll be going up against real human predators in your operational area. You'll have to cope fast and ferociously without wondering about the morality of it all.

Another thing: You should be able to make yourself right at home in a constantly tense, violent, and even irrational environment. Maybe even enjoy it. That sort of atmosphere is another constant. You're going to have to adjust equally well with those who dwell in that environment. You're an interloper, remember, and it's crucial that you adapt to their scene and style. Your expertise is not enough. You will have to learn how best to apply it in your new operational area.

PART 3

Mercenary Field Operations

As you move into the field, the conflicts in which you most likely will become involved will resemble the contemporaneous war against the Sandinista regime of Nicaragua. So you'd do well to be aware of key factors involved in that war.

Why did our side lose? Apart from all the political confusion and public relations, there were several reasons that have a direct bearing on the mercenary level.

One is that in all the years of fighting, the contra side never once developed an overall strategy, a master plan of operations. Incredible but true. Those guys down there never knew what they were going to be doing from one day to the next. That was enough to doom the thing from the outset. It would also negate any contribution to victory you could make. You'll be drawn to lost causes, true, but you probably shouldn't waste time with any outfit that doesn't even have a plan in place.

One result of the lack of planning was that a proper maintenance system was never developed. Those costly FAL rifles turned into rusty junk. And crucial air resupply collapsed when most of the old cargo aircraft the contras used crashed, not from enemy action but simply for lack of proper maintenance.

Another major byproduct of a lack of coherent strategy

was an ineffective intelligence system. Ask General John K. Singlaub, President Reagan's liaison with the Nicaraguan rebels. Intelligence collection itself was relatively simple, as in most Third World wars. But the intelligence was never acted upon, never implemented. So it was useless. That's why we're going to try to lay on you a heavy intelligence capability. It's crucial.

A screwed-up intelligence situation inevitably produces an atmosphere of unreality, even irrationality, at the leadership level. An example is the fact that Washington politicians and even contra field commanders dreamed into existence an "an internal front," an underground resistance movement inside Nicaragua. It didn't exist, strangled at birth by the ruthlessly efficient Sandinista state security apparatus. A corollary was the pious hope by those same people that the Nicaraguan people would rise up and confront the regime with "people's power," as per the Philippines. No way that was going to happen. Old Philippine dictator Ferdinand Marcos and his generals may have backed off from using tanks against their people—but *the Sandinistas wouldn't have hesitated five minutes and the people knew it.*

You have to be equally realistic.

Section 1:

Operational Area Orientation

As you progress through this manual, you'll note that you are being guided into two areas of special expertise: the new shock warfare and Third World/shock warfare intelligence. Special operations, in other words.

Why? Supply and demand at work. That's where your official counterparts are weakest. That's where the guys on the other side are strongest. So . . . there's your prime merc market.

For the same reasons, I urge you to specialize—at least initially—in a single operational area. Our government competition has plenty of area experts—but that's their prime function, being area experts. They lack operational skills. For that they call in operational people, Agency and military, who are studies in near-perpetual motion. They hit and run. They are shuttled and rotated and shuffled and reshuffled. They are not very effective.

If you wonder why we lose Third World wars, wonder no more. Apart from the obvious problem of a wobbly political base, sheer lack of professionalism is the reason. A crisis suddenly seems to explode—sudden only to our official intelligence—and Washington's response is to throw wave after wave of area amateurs at the problem. And it doesn't work. Never has, never will.

Want to win one for a change? Then here's where we begin your adaptation mode.

Transformation

A state ball in the National Palace of a Third World country. Your boss is a particularly violent individual, virtually a tribal warlord. For the occasion a musical group from the local Intercontinental Hotel has been retained.

This is unfortunate.

Inexplicably, the Palace official who handled arrangements for the ball has hired musicians from an ethnic group your patron, the warlord, cannot abide. The musicians play. The dictator and his aides, you among them, stand in icy silence. Your boss whispers an order.

At intermission, guards appear and quietly lead away the musicians. They are replaced by a different band. The first musicians disappear *permanently*. The confused official who arranged for them is also a victim of instant and terminal obscurity.

So you, you're a reasonably normal civilized person, what do you do?

Answer: You learn to appreciate your patron's musical tastes.

Incidents like the above really happen. That one did.

That's the sort of environment to which you must adjust. And it is *you* who will have to change—not your patrons, not your friends and foes, nor their whole scene. You have to take them as they are. It is you who interjected yourself into their thing. *It is you who must adapt.*

And you can. Your life patterns are not frozen in place—otherwise you wouldn't be reading this. You'll be amazed at how flexible and cosmopolitan you can be. The question is . . . how fast can you become environmen-

tally adjusted? You strike out fast in this game. Your first contract is always the most dangerous.

In fact, probably ninety percent of our would-be mercs drop out or are eliminated before, during, or after that crucial first exposure. Most of the casualties simply self-destruct. But survive the initial shock of entry into a claw-and-fang environment and you'll be on your way to professionalism.

It is then, compadre, that you suddenly realize that you have undergone a transformation. For better or worse, nothing will ever be the same for you again.

Successful environmental adjustment has two main components. One is strictly mental, a mind-set resulting from a conscious decision to adapt one's mode to the operational area. Second is the actual implementation of that decision. It won't be easy. Most field mercs remain forever misfits wherever they go—and they remain forever losers. They are never able to tune in to their conflict environment. They lack communication skills and literally don't know what's going on. That can be fatal.

Those who survive in this business and eventually prosper are the chameleon types. These are people able to establish two-way communications at their scene. They have learned a few hundred key words of the local language.

Shock Linguistics

The above means you'll shock hell out of friends and foes alike if you actually learn to speak their language—or even if you only master the basics.

That's what you're going to have to do, compadre. You're going to have to be something of a linguist. After

all, you don't want "another Vietnam." And neither do your new patrons. In fact, they know more about Vietnam than you think. They'll know of the language problem there—how the whole damn war had to be fought through interpreters. From Saigon Command down to company level, reliance was placed on interpreters who were half assed at best, enemy agents at worst. The results were horrendous.

Lack of language skills hits hardest in the very slots where merc services are most required: command, advisory, and instructional capacities—and intelligence.

Learning the local language, its basics, is fundamental to your operational area adaptation process. *And it can be painless.* You don't have to learn the whole language, just the essentials. Remember . . . you're no longer in good old Bravo Company. Now it's you who are the leader. And to lead you must communicate.

Don't freeze up on me now. It's not as tough as you think. The big problem is that you pucker up when you try to speak a foreign language. You fear ridicule. But all I'm asking is that you learn and use only a few hundred words. That's enough to break the barrier.

Make up your mind to learning five hundred to eight hundred words of a major European language—Spanish, French, perhaps Russian—and maybe more than one. It won't be as difficult as you think. Look at it this way: It's been estimated that if a foreigner learns eight hundred basic English words he can communicate in this language—and the English vocabulary is the world's largest.

With one or two basic European languages, plus a smattering of local idiom, you'll do just dandy in most Third

World countries. Sure you'll murder the language with your few hundred words. Why should you care? People think you're a maniacal monster anyway!

Probably the best way to learn five hundred to eight hundred base words of your operational area language is the Burton system. It's named for Sir Richard Burton, nineteenth century British explorer, adventurer, author, and linguist. Burton could learn a new language—complex Asian languages—in two months.

Here's how he did it.

I got a simple grammar and vocabulary, marked out the forms and words which I knew were absolutely necessary, and learnt them by heart by carrying them in my pocket, and looking over them at spare moments during the day.

I never worked for more than a quarter of an hour at a time, for after that the brain lost its freshness. After learning some three hundred words, easily done in a week, I stumbled through some easy bookwork and underlined every word that I wished to recollect, in order to read over my pencilings at least once a day. . . . I then chose some other book whose subject most interested me. The neck of the language was now broken. Progress was rapid.

If I came across a new sound, I trained my tongue to it by repeating it so many thousand times a day. When I read I invariably read out loud, so that the ear might aid memory. . . . Whenever I conversed with anyone in a language I was learning, I took the trouble to repeat

their words inaudibly after them, and so to learn the trick of pronunciation and emphasis.

Burton quickly ploughed his way, self-taught, through such languages as Urdu, Sanskrit, Farsi, and Arabic. He used only that system—followed by uninhibited practice of what he knew—and he was conversational within weeks. You could do the same. And you won't be studying anything as alien as Sanskrit.

Type out perhaps ten words at a time on three-by-five-inch cards. Carry the cards with you in your hip pocket. Glance at them when you have a free moment throughout the day. Learn five hundred words, concentrating on nouns and verbs. Next, try reading newspapers in that language. All the time, you're mouthing the words to yourself. Now . . . start talking to nationals of that language—and don't stop.

You never stop learning a language, any more than you ever cease expanding your professional knowledge. You begin the process of language study as far ahead as possible, before you leave for your initial operational area. You want to be able to hit the ground running linguistically—or at least gamely limping.

A modest language capability in your operational area is not only an enormous professional asset. It can save your life.

Making Your Transit

You've been given a contract in a country new to you. In fact, this may be your first account. Let's take a look at your logistics.

You'll probably be told to handle your own travel arrangements. That's actually a good sign. That means your new client or his agent is not merely interested in a quota of bodies—a bulk shipment of mercs too dumb to trust on their own. But organizing your own air movement can be dicey.

It means, for instance, that you'll probably have to pay your own air fare and expenses. Go along with it if you can somehow raise the money. There's a reason for it—the laws against recruiting mercs—and you'll be told you'll be reimbursed immediately on arrival.

Don't count on it. You probably won't get "reimbursed on arrival" unless you make a fuss. So go ahead and make a fuss. Your employer either forgot about reimbursement or his lieutenants pocketed the money. Don't be hesitant about raising the point at your first meeting with your new boss. This is important. Travel money and expenses will be a big item in your budget. They can also double your income.

And carefully note how, where, and by whom you are reimbursed. Learn the drill. You'll be back for more.

Now let's return to your point of origin and consider a tricky question: What about your weapons? Can you bring them?

Answer: If you travel international air transport, you may stow your weapons in checked-through luggage—but be prepared for a hassle—never on your person, even with a diplomatic passport. If you're smart, you asked for and got a written pass or permit from the agent with whom you've been in contact. With that you should breeze right

through customs where you're going—right? Wrong. That piece of paper is better than nothing—but not much.

You'll land in your client's country and most likely will be immediately exposed to one of the salient features of mercenary life: some of your master's hands don't know what the other hands are doing—or at least pretend not to. Airport customs and security personnel never heard of you—nor that agent—and stare at your "permit" in utter incomprehension.

But they do know firepower when they see it. Those two or three shiny pieces you've got stowed in your baggage intrigue them no end. . . . Not to worry—you'll get out of jail, hopefully, when your new boss hears about the foreign terrorist they grabbed at the airport.

The rule is: If you're taking mercenary service in a friendly country, whether you're carrying guns with you or not, whether or not you have permits and other papers, whatever, you should *arrange to be met at the airport* by someone with real authority. And arrange that as firmly as possible well before you arrive.

That's the key to getting almost anything done in these countries. Your patron undoubtedly has a squad of flunkies around with enough throw-weight to be effective with all the brass and bureaucrats you'll encounter. One of these guys will probably be on deck when you land—and he may be assigned to you semipermanently. That's his job. Of course, you can never be absolutely sure he will be around when you need him—but that's what makes life interesting in your profession.

So he may not be at the airport. But if you're prepared, *you'll be armed with an impressive list of names and phone*

numbers. They're almost as effective as your boss's high-priced gofer.

Remember: Airport officials and security men are in a peculiarly sensitive position. They feel both vulnerable and self-important—vulnerable because they're extremely exposed to official scrutiny and pressures; self-important because they're little guys who have been told to heed no one except the very top honchos or their people.

So keep your cool when you deal with these officials—but don't hesitate to throw names around if you have important local contacts. Otherwise, make your entry as low key as possible. That's true even if the country is relatively stable; *your patron won't want it publicized that he's hiring you.* Go through customs and immigration formalities without making a fuss. Do not expect or demand VIP treatment.

Always be aware that you are under scrutiny as soon as you disembark from your plane. And not only from officials. In these countries, *everybody* watches the airport and arrivals. That very much includes the opposition.

As for your weapons, you may have decided to bring them in by alternative methods. One is to leave your hardware behind and have it shipped to you later. This is dicey, too, particularly if you need them immediately. A much better route would be via diplomatic pouch.

This is done all the time—and if not through the pouch itself through other routes protected by diplomatic immunity. True . . . you'll have to be entering the service of some fairly powerful military or political figure—but it may well be that he has no official connection with his

government but still is able to exercise diplomatic privileges.

This is another fact of life where you're going: the existence of a power structure outside the regular bureaucracy. Learn to identify it, this shadow government; you'll be working with it—or against it.

What that means, too, is that your patron—whoever he is, whatever his official status or lack of it—probably has more damn small arms than he can handle. A few good men is what he needs. You'll have access to arms in quantity—if not quality.

But he'll probably make little or no proviso for your personal protection. That includes your weapons. You can expect to have to take the initiative in acquiring your guns and any logistics involved. You have to fend for yourself in this business.

Even on your initial trip to your patron's home turf, you may be sailing straight into a firefight. Shoot-outs at airports and on airport roads are practically a staple these days. You should at least try to be ready for business as soon as possible after you pass into the airport lobby. You're a possible target from that point on. Your presence constitutes a commitment. *You are now fair game for any of your new boss's enemies.*

Try to arrange this whenever you fly into real or potential bandit country: Be met at the airport by someone reliable with an equally reliable weapon and ample ammo. It won't be easy. Nobody and nothing is fully reliable in this business. But make the effort. Failing that, start phoning local contacts immediately on arrival.

It's not for nothing, for instance, that the long, dismal

road between El Salvador's international airport and the city is jocularly referred to sometimes as Machine Gun Alley. And wherever you land, there's that chance that while your side has not laid on a proper reception for you, the other side has.

You'll find, in this way of life, that after a while you'll go into a state of personal combat alert at airports. You can expect very interesting arrivals and departures. Preplan your air travel and logistics accordingly.

But don't think you can relax once you've safely reached your destination. From here on it gets even more interesting.

Assume the Chameleon Mode

Let's assume you have moved into your new operational area. You've made your transit. Always in this business, it's your initial entry into *anything* that is most hazardous.

You've made your transit, yes, but your entry phase has only started. You are now a transnational mercenary. *What we want to do now is keep you alive and relatively intact long enough for you to start operating from your own experience.* True, you have gone through the new paramilitary preoperational phases. You're no virgin—and that's why they've hired you.

But you're moving now from the rear echelons up to the point. You're moving into combat now, Joe, whether it be urban, rural, or clandestine—and almost certainly you'll be active in all three. All of which makes you prime target material.

So it's chameleon mode time for you, Joe Merc. *The first*

and most obvious adaptation you make is the way you look, your appearance. First thing, get a local haircut.

Let's assume you wear a uniform. You wear what they give you—as long as it's the uniform of the day. Keep it simple. No flashes, no division patches from old outfits, no glitzy odds and ends that set you apart from other officers. You'll have considerable leeway with your uniform. Don't exercise it. I once designed a splendid creation for myself, a cross between *Star Wars* and the French Foreign Legion. It was a mistake.

What you'll learn is to be inconspicuous—or else draw curious stares, laughs, and sniper fire.

The same with civilian dress. Select an appropriate role model of somewhat similar ethnic and social background: observe what he wears, and when, and be guided. Also note his habits and mannerisms. Observe those of other people of similar status. Don't try to ape them—but neither should your own mode clash with theirs.

Take the way you walk. And this is basic. Chances are you walk quite differently from the locals. See yourself as they see you. As a Westerner, you tend to believe that a direct line is the shortest distance between two points. You walk accordingly. You move along briskly, your arms swinging fore and aft in natural cadence.

You are conspicuous as hell. Whatever you are wearing, whatever your guise, you don't belong. In virtually all the Third World and even parts of Europe, you'll be spotted as alien—particularly if you walk through a crowded bazaar or public market or city plaza, places you should naturally avoid anyway—and you are immediately a potential target of opportunity.

Learn to fall into the rhythm and pace of other pedestrians when you're walking in public. Otherwise your guise won't mean a thing; it's your mode of movement that will be noticed.

Third World street people are likely to zigzag when they walk. They usually take shorter steps. There is also a lot of body movement. They swing their arms, but not in rhythm. And they walk slower, usually, than you do. They pause frequently. The farther down the socioeconomic scale, the more pronounced are these traits. At the bottom of the heap, the marketplace concentrations, you'll find that people don't just zigzag; they actually move in circles, ragged and erratic circles, with much pointless body turbulence.

I'm not suggesting you start staggering in circles if you pass a street market. I'm suggesting you stay away from the market. Uptown, you might try a little leisurely zigzagging . . . and, in any case, *avoid that brisk, businesslike stride through town.* Hostiles may not be able to resist plinking a few shots at you.

You should also learn to watch passing cars because (1) the drivers might deliberately run you down, and (2) even in the Third World most hits and snatches are made from vehicles. Later, you'll learn to handle your knife and fork properly in restaurants, discover that it's permissible to pick your teeth and scratch in public, learn how to spit, summon a waiter, and maybe to avoid showing the soles of your feet and pointing your elbow—and all the other local social niceties which add up to your chameleon mode.

And Observe Basic Security

—Consider your telephone tapped—by the opposition, your patron, or both. Don't list yourself in the book. Don't get cute with circumlocution; it's almost universally understood in the trade.

—Stay away from the media. Period.

—Be careful with your motor vehicle. Don't use official plates. Check for bombs before using.

—Stay away from international-type or luxury hotels. No lavish suites. No entertaining.

—Never advise anybody of your exact itinerary, your daily routine, or where you may be reached. And, of course, change your routes daily—a basic but constantly violated security measure.

—Carry convincing ID with you at all times—but almost any ID is better than none. Always have passport and valid visa.

—Stay away from embassies and consulates.

—Stay away from underworld haunts and hotel bars or other locations known to be frequented by foreign intelligence personnel; there's one or two such places in every major city.

—Be careful of servants, particularly your own. I've found it very easy to bribe other people's servants—and I've seen other cases in which faithful old family retainers set up their families for hits or snatches. Same could happen to you.

And the above is only the beginning. Build the basics into your personal security system. Concentrate on being security conscious until conditioned reflex sets in. The basic rule is: *Constant self-awareness.*

At all times you're keenly sensitive to who you are and what you are. You know where you are and where you are going. You always have up front the fact that *movement* is what exposes you to maximum vulnerability. So you carry your environment awareness with you: a 360-degree circle of traveling alertness.

You're on combat alert as you move. Watch for potential ambush sites, suspicious vehicles, possible escape and evasion routes in an emergency, potential improvised weaponry. When you stop or sit, get your back against something solid. Check doorways. Don't linger on street corners. Avoid open spaces. Move across streets fast.

Protect your personal space. Keep strangers literally at arm's length—this is often difficult in Third World cities—and let no one inside your personal defensive perimeter. Shake hands carefully. Avoid groups; togetherness can kill.

And always be alert for major flashpoints. This whole scene you're in could dissolve literally overnight. Be prepared for that, both mentally and materially.

Section 2:

Operational Guidelines

One of the old maestros of revolutionary warfare reduced his guidelines to a single operational principle. Since your type is notorious for swiping every good idea not set in concrete, feel free to make it your own. His advice:

Make a maximum effort to protect yourself while you make an equally maximum effort to destroy the enemy. This is the basis of all operations. Just as the sniper uses

cover and concealment to protect himself while positioning himself to destroy the enemy, all the way up to major strategic operations, this guideline remains the same.

That's from old Mao Tse-tung. He never attended staff or command schools but he did all right. Mao was typical of most irregular commanders in that he gives equal billing to self-preservation. That has to be your attitude. So let's review how you might survive dangerous situations. There's one preservative that neither Mao nor the regulars say much about.

Money and Your Survival

Sooner or later, you'll find yourself in a scenario something like this:

The capital city is in chaos. Mobs are rampaging through the streets—a sight more chilling than actual combat. Your patrons are dead or in hiding. It's time to bail out.

Despite the seeming anarchy, the situation is not as terminal as it looks. It's amazing, for instance, how public services somehow keep functioning in the midst of chaos. You'll probably find that flight operations are continuing at the international airport outside the capital. You've got to get there.

You bribe a rather reluctant street type to get you a taxi. You pay the cabbie a lavish fee in advance. He bribes his way past checkpoints that begin to appear. You also give him money to pass out to half-drunk guerrillas on the airport road. At the airport another bribe, perhaps several,

before you actually have a ticket. And you'll have to pay regular airfare as well.

But finally you're aboard. The plane takes off, climbs for altitude, then slowly circles the city and heads north. You peer out the window, staring down at the smoldering city below. You feel a sudden sense of exhilaration, then sink back limply in your seat. That was cutting it too close—but you made it!

You made it, compadre, for only one reason: you had money and knew how to use it. Back there right now they're slaughtering the poor slobs who didn't. This is just another example of the fact that *cash money is the most important item in your survival kit*.

You'll rarely be in a position or location where money is useless. Whether it's a commando raid or quiet intelligence mission or a barroom brawl—having money may mean your survival. There are no boonies so remote or locals so primitive that money isn't a factor. Bribery, compadre, is part of the human condition. Be grateful.

Factor in survival money for every mission. Your patron should be well aware of your need for a ready cash reserve. If not, make it very clear. For a reasonably high-risk job—just as a rough rule of thumb—you're entitled to demand about double the normal expenses of the mission.

If he refuses you mad money, you simply don't go. No way. In fact, you should probably have nothing more to do with him. If you have to argue the point, it means your employer is either dangerously stupid or dangerously underfinanced—and quite often both. You have little future with such types.

As a matter of fact, *it's a good idea to argue for more no*

matter how much money your patron puts up. You'll seem more professional; it's breathtaking how many people there are—neophytes and nickel-and-dimers—who will accept the hairiest assignments for nothing more than walking-around money—but who in terms of results are overpaid. Unless your patron is also a nickle-and-dimer, he'll know this and won't make a fuss over a few thousand extra dollars.

Remember: Thriftiness is no virtue in this business. You'll be expected to push for as much money as you can extract. If you're too greedy he'll merely turn you down—but without rancor.

What form should your survival money take?

For normal expenses the coin of the realm in which you plan to operate—plus an international currency. Almost invariably, you should have U.S. dollars; they're acceptable virtually everywhere, including hostile countries. Split your reserve between cash and traveler's checks. The latter can be used in even the most turbulent areas. Bear in mind that the value of hard currency—or its equivalent—always soars in violent situations and local people will accept almost any paper negotiable in dollars.

In fact, experienced SOFs can and do make enormous profits on this fact alone. Wealthy people in these disintegrating societies will sell you their soul for big U.S. bucks and negotiable paper—their soul, their virginal daughter, and, most important, their family jewels. At discount rates, of course. The whole scene is a giant going-out-of-business sale. In time, too, you'll learn how to take that unwanted local currency, and/or controlled currency, and guide it through one or more exchanges in other currencies

and come out with dollars—which you then either keep or exchange back into the original currency at panicky black market exchange rates. Even small factors can add up: you can, for instance, sell your larger-denomination U.S. bills to the fleeing rich for more than their equivalent in smaller denomination bills.

For your own survival money, the main point to remember is that immediate and safe acceptance of your medium of exchange is the paramount factor. Don't get cute. Do not try to substitute products with alleged easy convertibility for hard currency or its equivalent. This means no gold. No narcotics. No rare stamps. None of that nonsense. Keep it simple.

The same with bribery. You don't pay off penniless peasants or street urchins with hundred-dollar bills; they'll get excited—and, incredibly, even though they end up losing the money, they run around showing off what you gave them.

In crisis situations never be backward about passing out survival bribes—bribes appropriate to the person you bribe and the danger to him. Plenty of Marxists, both officials and fanatics, will accept your capitalist dollars—and not blow the whistle. In fact, they are the people who will have a direct and immediate interest in getting you out of the country soonest.

One of the things that make this way of life worthwhile is the sensation when one has emerged relatively intact from such situations.

No cocaine high can equal the euphoric feeling of getting back to home base. You owe yourself a cold drink and

a warm female. And if you have any survival money left, you damn well keep it . . . you earned it.

Okay . . . you were home free on that one. But suppose you can't buy your way out of a desperate flashpoint situation? It happens. And you'll have to prepare accordingly.

Your Personal Evasion

The proper military term is *escape and evasion*. We're skipping the "escape" phase (from incarceration) because no one, least of all the military, has devised any practical *unaided* escape doctrine.

And you, Joe, a lone operator, can count on no help at all from the outside. Your only option is to evade capture. And for that, you need two fundamentals already in place:

1. An evasion plan.
2. An evasion kit.

Let's take the kit first. It should be light and simple. It shouldn't be a damned hobby with you, as with some Walter Mittys, nor are its contents toys. Basics should include map, compass, money, passport, other ID (fake or genuine), pistol, ammo, utility knife, food concentrates, canteen, razor, plus basic other items required by the environment. If you're in the deep tropics, you might include snakebite medication and a water-purification agent.

You could put most of that in an attaché case. Stash it wherever it's readily accessible—and be prepared to use it. You'll also have ready an evac plan, plus one or more alternatives.

If they shut down the airport, you'll grab your kit and

head cross country (stay off islands, Joe; they just ain't healthy for people in your trade) for the border. And you'll very likely make it.

As always, you're on your own. Any assistance you get will be given through bribery or coercion. Friendship no longer counts. And forget about any underground to spirit you to safety. There isn't any. Nor should you forget you're a foreigner—and a mercenary, whatever your status. They take you alive, you're in for real VIP treatment!

All of which justifies extreme measures on your part. If you can't evade out without help, don't hesitate. Secure that help by whatever means—and do it immediately. The following incident is an example of desperate but judicious blackmail.

An operator in a turbulent Third World land awoke one day to a new and even more violent world. The old regime had suddenly been toppled from within. Street mobs instantly appeared. The usual transition trauma began. Our hero was spotted sneaking through the streets with his evasion kit. He was mobbed, nearly lynched. In the ensuing pursuit he lost the kit.

Battered and demoralized, he hid out for several days, pondering his desperate situation. Suddenly . . . inspiration!

He made his way to the office of a rich local businessman. Like most of his commercial brethren in that country, the mercenary knew that the businessman had profited handsomely from *both* sides during the conflict. He'd had secret deals going with the late strongman. But he had also

done business with the revolutionaries and had paid his dues.

The American was acquainted with the businessman. He knew it would be business as usual for the guy. As the merc barged into his office, he could hear shouts and shots from the rioters outside. The businessman stared at his sudden visitor, stunned.

Our hero parked his butt on the businessman's desk and announced he was there to stay—or at least until those mobs out there tracked him down.

"Then they'll bust in here, friend, and get us both. And if I'm going, baby, so are you. They'll find us here, cozy-like, and they won't give a shit about your high-priced friends. They'll shred your ass just as fast as mine. . . ."

"Unless you get me the hell out of here. Out of the country. You've got your connections. I want money, airline tickets, exit pass, and an escort to the airport. Move your ass if you want to save it."

The businessmen swore, sobbed, sweated—then arranged for the American to be flown to safety.

An often-overlooked facet of the mercenary way is this: You're always in a position to blackmail powerful people. Never exercise it until and unless your survival requires it. Then, don't hesitate.

Field Operational Environment

You should never relax in an operational area. You'll have an urban underworld with which to contend—and out in the boonies are guerrillas. The focal point of conflict tends to fluctuate from urban to rural setting—and the latter usually means jungles, swamps, and mountains.

Your kind of war always flourishes best in hot, unsanitary countries. That means you'll have to contend with an environment hostile in more ways than one. Don't worry, you can cope. Of course, shifting to a jungle environment can, as in Vietnam, drastically reduce the efficiency and productivity of conventional troops.

Fortunately, compadre, you're not conventional. To do your job properly, you'll have to operate at peak efficiency no matter how soggy the swamps or dank the jungle. You may come down with dysentery—everybody in the tropics comes down with a little dysentery from time to time—but your patron and peers will still expect you to function. Dengue or malaria should lay you up only briefly. And no heat prostration is allowed. And as for snakes, you have with you one of those excellent new snakebite kits—and know how to use it; snakes are a real problem where you're going. You'll be happy to hear the locals dread snakes even more than you do. Another cheerful note: Most guerrilla leaders are city boys; they don't like the jungled boonies either.

Another point often overlooked: There are damned few untamed jungles left in the world. I personally compare every jungle I've encountered to the one genuine article I once experienced years ago: the absolutely mind-boggling jungles of New Guinea. There is no comparison. Any other jungle is like Central Park. Anywhere else in the world, in any other jungle, you're really not too far from a sort of pseudocivilization. You'll find all the modern conveniences and services: bars, whorehouses, muggers, thieves, merchants, politicians, even television.

Of course, they coexist alongside the genuine perils of

jungle living. And the best way to cope with a jungle environment is to do what you do if you live in a crime-racked city. *You take routine survival precautions—and don't worry excessively about the dangers.* The jungle itself is not your enemy; it merely has a number of unpleasant features. Don't fight the deep boonies—and I'm not getting metaphorical. Your mental attitude is important. Adjust to the scene. Move to its rhythm. The more frantic you become about defending yourself against its hazards—disease and snakes—the more your chances of being zapped by those nasty critters. Never fails.

You'll need to be in good physical shape, true, and take routine precautions. Remember that the worst tropical danger to your health is not guerrillas, not snakes, not malarial mosquitoes; it is human shit, the prime source of parasitical infection. It is on the human hands that prepare your food and it's in your water. But you'll learn to cope even with that. Incidentally, no jungle is so dense—except maybe New Guinea's—that two safe, reliable products are not available: poultry and beer.

However, let us be realistic: You may be able to adapt yourself reasonably well to a jungle environment—but you are peculiarly exposed here to the danger of dying from an infected wound. In your wars, Joe Merc, you'll seldom have access to proper medical treatment. You'll lack trained medics and effective medication. Not for you the luxury of medevac. And in jungle country even a slight scratch will turn into a running sore if not immediately treated. You get a gunshot in the torso and you're dead.

One paradox you may encounter is that jungle dwellers are often not very well adapted to their own environment.

For instance, don't believe that myth about magic cures by village shamans or witch doctors. It doesn't happen. An American pharmacologist who made a study of jungle medicine says that it really doesn't extend much beyond production of hallucinogens and fish and game poisons.

And you'll find jungle dwellers depressingly hazy about country other than their immediate locale. Which is why I suggest that what you need for any jungle op is an expert *outsider* who knows both the country and the people. My own initiation into junglecraft was by way of Budapest-born Colonel Lazlo Pataky of Nicaragua, highly decorated veteran of the French Foreign Legion and the Israeli War of Independence. In boondocking through Central America, it was invariably Lazlo who guided the native guides.

You'll find it much easier to adjust to hill country and even mountain environments, your other probable operational areas (temperate zones like the plains of western Europe belong to the regulars). You may also, of course, find yourself on tropical islands both mountainous and jungled. Your terrain adjustment is the same as to mountains and jungles—with this difference: Think well about what you're doing before you involve yourself in island operations.

An island is a natural trap. With a continental country you can ooze in one side and out the other. You can toe-dip. You can go in and recon around, testing and gingerly probing to see if you want to go all the way into deep bandit country. Not so with an island. For a merc, going into an island op is an absolute act and a dangerous one; getting off one is even worse. . . . Believe me!

Mountain country adjustment is made easier for us non-

mountain climbers by the fact that mountain types, including guerrillas, know nothing about the Alpine antics so diligently pursued by Western armies. They just walk up and down hills, carefully avoiding scaling cliffs, peaks, and the like. The secret is to *walk the way they do*. Watch them. They take short steps, shifting their weight as needed, never pushing down with their feet on steep inclines, rarely changing pace, never straining. You'll note that mountaineers seem much better adjusted to their environment than are the jungle flatlanders. You can go into their mode without worry—their food, drink, way of life—which you wouldn't dare do with those dumb jungle-bunnies.

But be wary of your transit from flatlands to mountain country. Mountain sickness won't hit you unless you're really high up; what can wipe you out is the transition from lowland heat to mountain chill. Have the right clothing and hole up for a couple days, if you can, letting your body adjust.

Try to avoid any drastic temperature change. Try, too, to avoid any *protracted* operations that take you to extremes of terrain and climate. It's crucial to your combat role to be able to operate at peak performance in brief encounters—and you simply can't do it after prolonged exposure to the high sierras or deep jungle. Those extremes will take their toll.

Brief forays into jungle or mountain country—no problem. If you operate for longer periods in moderate jungles and mountains—again no problem. But you can't afford to expend time, energy, and resources coping with debilitating terrain. And an equally important factor: you're not going to resolve your conflict by rock hopping and boon-

docking. The real cockpit of decisive action is not out there. That's only the end result of what's happening elsewhere.

In fact, conflict resolution may not even be in your immediate operational area.

Regional Adjustment

You'll have more problems than shifting mental gears constantly and adapting to an ever-changing pattern of combat within your patron's country. You've also got to worry about the neighbors.

The time has long passed when a country could have its own private civil war. Now, everybody gets in on the act. Your entire region is at war, directly or indirectly. In fact, your guy's "civil war" will quite probably be won or lost on the clandestine battlefields of neighboring friendly or hostile governments. Your boss knows that.

And you, Joe Merc, are a prime candidate for use in clandestine special ops in the neighbors' yard. In fact, it's quite possible that you were hired for precisely that purpose.

So think regionally. Once reasonably oriented in your new country—if you haven't done so long before—saturate yourself with both basic and current information regarding the entire region. Give yourself a foundation on which you can build a more detailed data bank of intelligence.

Following is a meld of two similar General Study Outlines from the U.S. Army manuals *Special Forces Operational Techniques* and *Guerrilla Warfare*. This slightly modified version covers the key points you should know about your area—or be able to find out if needed. The

points cited are *not* of equal importance. It's your job to weigh and select the subjects most important to your specific mission.

General Area Study

Political

Government, international political orientation, and degree of popular support.

Attitudes and probable behavior of identifiable segments of the population toward the United States, its allies, and the enemy.

National historical background.

Foreign dependence or alliances.

Geographic Positions

Area and dimensions.

Latitude and climate.

Generalized physiography.

Generalized land use.

Strategic location.

Neighboring countries and boundaries.

Natural defenses including frontiers.

Points of entry and strategic routes.

Population

Total and density.

Breakdown into significant ethnic and religious groups.

Division between urban, rural, or nomadic groups.

Large cities and population centers.

Rural settlement patterns.

Areas and movement patterns of nomads.

National Economy

Technological standards.

Natural resources and degree of self-sufficiency.

Financial structure and dependence upon foreign aid.

Agriculture and domestic food supply.

Industry and level of production.

Manufacture and demand for consumer goods.

Foreign and domestic trade and facilities.

Fuels and power.

Telecommunications and radio systems.

Transportation adequacy.

Railroads.

Highways.

Waterways.

Commercial air installations.

National Security

Center of political power and the organization for national defense.

Military forces; summary of order of battle.

Internal security forces and police forces.

Paramilitary forces.

Geography

Climate. General classification of the country as a whole with normal temperatures, rainfall, etc., and average seasonal variations.

Terrain. General classification of the country, noting outstanding features, i.e., coasts, plains, deserts, mountains, hills, plateaus, rivers, lakes.

Former heavily forested areas subjected to widespread cutting or dissected by paths and roads; also the reverse; pasture or wasteland that has been reforested.

Former waste- or pasture land that has been resettled and cultivated and is now being farmed; also the reverse;

former rural countryside that has been depopulated and allowed to return to wasteland.

Any significant recent change in rural population density.

Drainage. General pattern.

Main rivers, direction of flow.

Characteristics of rivers and streams—width, current banks, depths, kind of bottoms, obstacles.

Seasonal variations, such as dry beds and flash floods.

Large lakes or areas of many ponds or swamps (potential LZs for amphibious aircraft.)

Coast. Examine primarily for infiltration, exfiltration, and resupply routes.

Tides and currents.

Beach footing and covered exit routes.

Quiet coves and shallow inlets or estuaries.

Geological basics. Types of soil and rock (including areas for potential LZs for light aircraft).

Forests and other vegetation.

Natural or cultivated.

Types, characteristics, and significant variations from the norm at different elevations.

Cover or concealment to include density.

People

The following outline should be used for an analysis of the population in any given region or country, or as the basis for an examination of the people within a subdivision. Particular attention should be given to those areas within the country where the way of life and the characteristics of the local inhabitants are at variance in one or more ways with the more prevalent national life.

Basic racial stock and physical characteristics.

Types, features, dress, and habits.

Significant variations from the norm.

Standard of living and cultural levels.

Primarily note the extremes away from average.

Class structures; degree of established social stratification and percentage of population in each class.

Health and medical standards.

Common diseases.

Standards of public health.

Medical facilities and personnel.

Potable water supply.

Sufficiency of medical supplies and equipment.

Ethnic components. This should be analyzed only if of sufficient size, strength, and established bonds to constitute a dissident minority of some consequence.

Location or concentration.

Basis for discontent and motivation for change.

Opposition to majority or the political regime.

External or foreign ties.

Religion.

Note wherein the national religion definitely shapes the actions of the individual.

Religious divisions. Major and minor religious groups of consequence.

Traditions and customs (particularly taboos). Note whether they are sufficiently strong and established that they may influence an individual's attitude or actions even during a war situation.

Rural countryside.

Peculiar or different customs, dress, and habits.

Village and farm buildings.

Political parties or factions.

If formed around individual leaders or based on established organizations.

If a dominant party exists, is it nationalist in origin or does it have foreign ties?

Major legal parties, their policies and goals.

Illegal or underground parties.

Violent opposition factions within major political organizations.

Dissidence. Active or potential, noting if dissidence is localized or related to external movements.

Resistance movements. Areas and nature of operations, strength, motivation, leadership, reliability, possible contacts, and outside support.

Guerrilla groups. Areas and nature of operations, strength, equipment, leadership, contacts, external support.

Enemy

Political.

Outside power. Number and status of nonnational personnel, their influence, organization, control mechanism.

Dominant national party. Dependence on and ties with an outside power; strength, organization, and apparatus; evidences of dissension at any level in the party; and the location of those areas within the country that are under strong or weak central control.

Nonnational or occupying forces in the country.

Morale, discipline, political reliability.

Personnel strength.

Organization and basic deployment.

Uniforms and unit designations.

Insignia.

Leadership.

Training and doctrine.

Equipment and facilities.

Logistics.

Effectiveness.

Indigenous armed forces. Review above.

Internal security forces.

Strength and general organization, distinguishing between national and nonnational elements.

Overall control mechanism.

Special units and distinguishing insignia.

Morale, discipline, and relative loyalty of native personnel to the occupying or national regime.

Nonnational surveillance or control over national (indigenous) security forces.

Vulnerabilities of the internal security system.

Psychological vulnerabilities.

Deployment and disposition of security elements.

Exact location down to smallest unit or post.

Chain of command and communications.

Equipment, transportation, and chain of mobility.

Tactics (seasonal and terrain variations).

Methods of patrol, supply, and reinforcements.

Location of all known security posts and units for all key installations, particularly along main lines of communication and power lines.

Exact location and description of the physical arrangement, particularly security, of forced labor camps, concentration camps, POW camps.

Details of the locale, type, and effectiveness of internal security controls, including checkpoints, identification cards, passports, and travel permits.

Railroads; bridges and tunnels.

Telecommunications.

Electric power; utilities, power grids.

Military storage and supply.

Military headquarters and installations.

Radar and electronic devices.

Highways; bridges and tunnels.

Inland waterways—canals.

Seaports, airports, transport and support facilities.

Natural gas and oil pipelines.

Oil refineries.

Water supply systems.

Sewage and drainage systems.

Several comments about the foregoing are in order.

Assuming you're back at base and you're reviewing file data on the target country, almost certainly most of the material you have on the *key points* in that list is either inaccurate or out of date—particularly the latter.

You could mount a major intelligence operation just keeping that study current—and still lack good information regarding the specific questions you need answered. You simply can't trust any kind of Third World intelligence gathering and analysis—nor Western either! *You've got to be your own intelligence officer if you're involved in planning or participating in a crucial mission.*

That means, Joe Merc, recon time for you. That's right; you'll probably have to go in and poke around for yourself. Actually, *pretactical mission recon is a basic mercenary*

function. Almost certainly, some kind of recon job will come your way. So will solo tactical missions in which you don't have the benefit of prior survey. They are in no way suicidal as long as you know precisely what you're looking for or are going to do before you leave base.

What both types also have in common is this: Where it really gets shitty is when you have to contact local agents in a hostile country. That's the scary part. You really know little about those people. They may be under surveillance. They may have been turned. Probably no real system has been worked out for secure contact. But you may have no choice. Just try to avoid it if possible. Or else keep contact short, minimal, and tell them nothing about yourself.

Whatever the nature of your solo flight, it will involve intelligence—and it is here, I think, that we cross over the bridge separating the merc from the soldier of fortune. The distinction was, according to du Berrier, that mercenaries were sheep who had to obey orders blindly. A SOF does not. He is more able to take charge of his own life—even though he may remain basically a mercenary. And so it is now that you transit into soldier of fortune territory.

Even so, don't let it go to your head. Following is the sort of thing you may well encounter.

Regional Penetration Missions

A few months after Fidel Castro took power in Cuba, an American mercenary in the service of a strongly anti-Castro government slipped into Cuba. His mission was to make contact secretly with a Latin American embassy in Havana and prepare a joint operation with the assistance of that country's ambassador.

The agent had been carefully and unusually well briefed prior to the mission. The location of the embassy was carefully explained as well as how to avoid being intercepted by the secret police on the sidewalk in front.

Our intrepid merc made his way to Havana and to the vicinity of the embassy. He evaded the police screen by going to the side door of an attached building at nightfall, as per instructions. He was admitted to the embassy and taken to the ambassador. The agent outlined the proposed joint operation. The ambassador listened carefully and took notes.

Finally the ambassador spoke, smiling sardonically.

"I'm sure my government will find this extremely interesting—the government of Mexico. This is the Mexican Embassy. I'm the Mexican ambassador. You're in the wrong embassy."

The mercenary choked back a horrified scream. Wrong embassy? Mexican embassy! The Mexicans were friendly to the Castro regime. He fled back out the side door . . . and out of Cuba.

Right location, wrong embassy. Wrong intelligence. Maybe the wrong agent—the idiot. It wasn't funny then—nor for years after—but it's the sort of thing that's inherent in this weird way of life.

What was different about that particular mission was that there had been at least an attempt at preparation. You'll usually find that your Third World patrons are unbelievably casual about that sort of thing. Without a twinge, and even less information, they'll launch you into extreme danger. That goes with the job, they say in effect; you're supposed to be able to fend for yourself. Your pa-

tron vaguely outlines the assignment, hands over money, and disappears. The rest is up to you.

It's also up to you to get every scrap of pertinent information before you take off. And you do your own planning well in advance. You're your own intelligence and operations officer.

Let's assume you've been given a typical assignment to penetrate hostile territory. You're to fly to the capital city for a quick reconnaissance, a target evaluation, a clandestine contact (gulp!), a routine hit. This means you've no time for toe dipping or oozing in around the edges. You go straight in. Your only safety is in speed, professionalism, and precision. You get in, do it, get out.

You fly into the target city from a third country using a neutral airline. You pass official scrutiny at the airport. You register at a quiet middle-class hotel, since police surveillance tends to focus on the international hotels on one level and the fleabags at another. You relax. Now, you say to yourself, you'll spend a quiet day or so wandering around to get the feel of the place; you also want to see if you're under surveillance. Right? *Wrong!*

Move out, man. You don't have the luxury of a day to get your bearings. You did your homework. You know you landed at that airport with flimsy credentials and a tacky cover story. You're on a typical do-it-yourself sort of job. Your backup is nonexistent.

You passed through airport security with no problem—even though you may have felt a little queasy it didn't show, I hope—but you probably looked interesting enough to be noted for a routine follow-up check. Your hotel will also routinely notify local security of your presence. And

eventually security will get around to running another check on you.

Okay, the term *eventually* tells you little. But there's no rule of thumb. The time lag depends on the country and the circumstances. You may have three days, maybe a week, maybe longer, before they seriously look you over again. Meanwhile, you might have another problem: other security types may well pick up on a lone foreign male of military age and bearing. And you can't afford any in-depth investigation.

And don't come on with any nonsense about going "underground" *once inside the city*. No change of identity, no disappearing act, no disguises, no hide-and-seek games. You've got a job to do; just stick to the identity you had when you came in.

So get on *immediately* with whatever you came to do. You have preplanned so there is an economy of effort and no wasted time or motion. *You don't visibly rush, of course, and you allow for surveillance. Even so, you work quickly. You're poetry in motion, a quietly efficient machine.* Minutes may count. You never forget the "unforeseen factor" that is always operative in these jobs. Something unforeseen *always* happens—and the longer you linger in a danger area the more exposed you are to an idiotic incident that can be a wipe-out.

If you've planned and executed your mission properly, chances are excellent you'll be back aboard an outward-bound plane without incident. The very fact that this kind of operation is so primitive is your best safeguard. Even your sloppy send-off was a blessing in disguise: you *didn't* have sixteen different people pawing over your mission—

minimizing, but not eliminating, possibility of a leak. *And you sneaked in and operated below the threshold of a ponderous security bureaucracy geared to cope with its hostile criminal or bureaucratic opposite numbers.*

However, do not succumb to a common spook syndrome—and by spook I mean all of us, friend and foe, official and free-lance, who toil in the twilight zone: the self-image of the oh-so-clever fox who revels in outwitting the stupid, clumsy hounds of the security services. That attitude is incredibly common. Keep it up, smart-ass, and those hounds will rip you apart.

Another danger, one confronting mercs in particular, is *casual violence*. It's the opposite of organized official repression—but it can be just as dangerous. You're virtually certain to find yourself in encounters like the following.

Hostile Group Encounters

—You're driving alone in the boonies. You round a curve and suddenly you're confronted with a burned-out bus blocking the road. Belatedly, you realize you're in bandit country. A dozen armed men materialize around you.

—You're driving through a town in a state of semisiege. A small mob surrounds your car as it snakes through the narrow streets. You suspect they have weapons but they're kept out of sight. They begin to rock your car back and forth.

—Driving or afoot, you run into a patrol—militia, army, guerrillas; you can't be sure. But they hold you at gunpoint.

—You're stopped at a military checkpoint. A nervous soldier spots you as a foreigner and that makes him even

more nervous. He levels his weapon at you. That makes you nervous.

These encounters all have two things in common. First, you weren't shot on the spot. Second, that gives you certain options.

Initially, exercise the option of doing nothing. No sudden reactions. What you do is at first less important than what you do *not* do. Stay cool and don't make any moves that might make it worse. For instance, there's an old cliché that when a man points a gun at you he means to use it. If you act on that assumption you'll quickly fetch up dead in our countries. A gunpoint situation is dangerous, sure, but don't get carried away.

And despite the situation, you can't even assume that they are actively hostile toward *you*. You're in a very common encounter here. This sort of thing happens all the time. Chances are these people are only semihostile—meaning they themselves are not entirely sure what their attitude should be.

But they could go either way. You yourself could be the decisive factor in tilting them.

Armed bands are inevitable in every guerrilla-type conflict. Sometimes they're spun off from main-force guerrilla units. Other groups may be armed by the government. Still others may be local self-defense forces not really controlled by either side. Then you also have plain looters and criminals. And, of course, they may actually be real guerrillas or government troops.

Whoever they are, *act* as if they were friendlies. SMILE! Literally, smile. Beam upon them. Do not run; they are almost sure to have auto weapons available if not visible.

And forget all about those dopey "disarming techniques" you may have been taught. And keep that frozen grin in place.

Your captors will be very curious about you. They'll watch you carefully. And they'll pick up very readily on your facial expression and attitude, even your tone of voice.

By now you should speak some of the local idiom. That alone might keep you alive. Even a few words will help. If you speak only English, it calls attention to you as a foreigner—and *there is a streak of plain xenophobia in many Third Worlders, whatever their political persuasion*. And you want to come across as an amiable, relatively harmless human being.

Talk to them quietly, self-confidently. Try to be casual. Imagine you're face to face with a strange Doberman in someone else's yard. You know what will happen if you get excited or start fleeing. Behave the same way in this kind of encounter. Do not bluster or threaten. Do not demand they contact your ambassador. They don't care—or even understand—how important you are. To them, you're merely another passing duck in their shooting gallery.

Nor do you go into the aloof take-me-to-your-leader routine. Probably the only leader they have is that little kid with the big gun. Kids, teenies and even younger, all with assorted weaponry, are a fixture in these situations.

Another thing . . . that little kid with the big gun is probably a lot older than he looks. And a lot smarter too. Do not treat him as if he's retarded. That silly grin he has is deceptive.

What is unnerving about this type of situation is the

mercurial moods of the people involved. They'll be chattering amiably one moment, on the verge of killing you the next. So it behooves you to *try to make a friend—fast*. If that kid with the gun *is* the leader, focus on him. If there seems to be no real leader, pick another guy who seems as if he might be receptive. Or a woman—but be careful with them too; they can be nastier than men.

Project your dynamic personality at him or her. SMILE. Try a feeble joke. When they get around to discussing what to do with you, you may have a friend in court. It may take only one or two people solidly for you—or against you—to be decisive. The others don't care either way.

One of the best icebreakers in a situation like this is to wave around those pieces of paper documenting you, more or less, as a scam journalist. You proceed to ask the object of your affections for an interview. Or you are carrying a camera—you're a photojournalist—and you ask him or his buddies to pose for pictures.

There is no country so benighted nor people so dim that the prospect of newspaper publicity doesn't produce an excited response—even if they're illiterate. Carrying a camera reinforces the journalistic image. *But . . .* if you have fallen in with main-force pros, be very, very careful working the photo angle; they probably won't want their pictures taken. And you don't want them stuffing that camera down your throat.

A final note on these encounters: Vehicles are death traps. Passenger cars are not designed to be gun platforms. And Third World paramilitaries dearly love to kill vehicles.

Rule: If you're in a car that's been hopelessly cornered,

bail out fast. Fight, run, or surrender—but *get out of that car*.

Note: Conditions like the foregoing prevail in varying degrees throughout most Third World wars. However, you can expect such encounters to peak in intensity at (1) the onset of the revolution, and (2) when the target regime goes into its death throes.

Much of the interval in between will be taken up with implementation of the following doctrine.

Intermediate-Level Insurgency

Time now for you to meet the Maestro—the global guru of terrorist-guerrilla warfare, the guy who forged the two conflict forms into one—and made it sound like the simple sense it really is. Forget Che and Mao. Meet Carlos Marighella.

Basically, this comes under the heading of know-your-enemy. This is the kind of doctrine you'll be going up against if you're serving the non-Marxist established order. *In the attack mode against hard-core Marxist totalitarian regimes, it is less useful*. You simply wouldn't have any opening to get into the political recruitment and organization Marighella advises. But it's lethal against more open societies.

Carlos Marighella has been dead since 1969. But he is still very much with us in his little guerrilla text, *Minimanual of the Urban Guerrilla*. Several versions have been published—it's been slightly modified and expanded by his disciples—all of them excellent. The title is somewhat misleading. What Marighella calls urban GW is actu-

ally classic secondary-level insurgency. His doctrine is what you see happening on the TV nightly news.

Critics label Marighella simplistic—and they're right. His tactics are designed for simplistic people; there's nothing esoteric about the Marighella doctrine. And the fact that it is so basic is what makes our complex modern societies so vulnerable to the kind of action Marighella advocates.

Let's briefly review Marighella's pertinent points. We are also in a position to evaluate them after more than fifteen years of widespread application.

Successful revolution depends on three essentials: *manpower, weapons, and resources*. It is manpower, M says quite correctly, that is the most difficult and crucial to obtain. Top priority must be to motivate and train revolutionary manpower—and in fact that's what's happening right now in guerrilla and terrorist training camps worldwide.

Workers are the best fighting material, particularly peasants attracted to the cities. These are the teeming Third World millions who fill vast urban slum areas. Such people have rural backgrounds but have become familiar with urban life.

Peasants are almost equally important. They have an intuitive knowledge of the land and its people. Peasants communicate best with peasants. And they are vital for logistic support.

Students rank third on Marighella's manpower list. They have, M says, a special talent for revolutionary violence. (M is actually hyping the role of students in this type of warfare. They are loud and visible in the incipient

or primary level of insurgency—but they fade fast as conflict escalates.)

Intellectuals and clergymen are primarily useful for spreading the gospel of revolution. As combatants, Marighella rightfully values *women* more than intellectuals or clergy.

(Marighella, however, does not mention the most important people of all: people like him, the prime movers, the organizers and general staff of the revolution. These senior cadres, not the cannon fodder on M's list, are the core of the revolution. In fact, Brazil's terrorist underground collapsed when Marighella himself was terminated.)

Basic combat formation, according to the M doctrine, is the four-to-five-man firing group. Each group is commanded by a natural leader, a concept identical to that of the Yanqui general, "Slam" Marshall. In a radical departure for a Marxist strategist, M advises that each unit be permitted to function independently. The group sets its own targets and objectives and initiates operations without awaiting orders from the center.

For weapons M recommends compact assault rifles and SMGs. Guerrillas should not use long rifles, he advises, and specifically warns against that longtime guerrilla favorite, the FN FAL. Shotguns? Yes, at night and in ambushes. But avoid anything heavier. You need speed and mobility. Become proficient with your weapons—but damn it, M emphasizes, don't waste ammo. Try to be that special type of guerrilla: the sniper.

Basic to the M doctrine is *surprise*—and M obviously wishes there were a stronger term for the action he advocates. Surprise can best be achieved by knowing the terrain

and knowing the enemy. Surprise compensates for the guerrillas' initial weakness.

Surprise means:

Knowing the army's deployment while the army is ignorant of that of the guerrillas.

Allowing the safest and most effective application of force.

Selection by the guerrillas of the when, where, and why of the attack—not the army.

Mobility and speed are made possible by knowledge of the terrain, disruption of enemy communications and transport, use of light weapons, and good intelligence. The quest for fresh intelligence must be ceaseless. Be decisive in your movements. Be decisive at all times. Vacillation kills.

M divides tactics into: assaults, raids, ambushes, street tactics, work disruption, liberation of prisoners, executions, kidnappings, and general terrorism. Operations begin by seizing money and arms, then escalate to full-blown revolutionary warfare. And M's countless little disciples do precisely that.

Like the rest of us on both sides of the barricades, Marighella's favored operation is that all-time classic of precision choreography: a meticulously planned and executed *raid*. M broods on the fact that inexperienced tacticians often plan and execute raids that collapse into chaos. Take it step by step, says he, planning each phase of the operation and assigning responsibility. Divide your raid up into:

Investigation of information.

Reconnaissance of terrain.

Study and timing of routes.

Mapping.

Transportation.

Personnel selection.

Weaponry selection.

Practice.

Execution.

Covering action.

Retreat.

Dispersal.

But operational planning and execution counts for nothing without adequate *internal security*, warns M. Extreme caution is advised. Enemy infiltration into the organization is the major threat. Recruitment should be carefully controlled and screened. Need-to-know compartmentalization should be rigidly enforced.

Marighella concludes with his famous "seven sins" of the clandestine combatant . . .

Inexperience—assuming enemy is stupid.

Boastfulness.

Vanity.

Overestimation of one's strength.

Recklessness.

Reacting to one's anger.

Lack of planning.

He knew whereof he spoke, that man Marighella. In fact, he himself was prone to fall into the emotional turbu-

lence he warned about on that list—and it killed him. But don't feel superior: those same sins have killed many a merc—and can *you* say you're free from sin?

Now let's focus on that seventh deadly sin: "lack of planning." It's endemic on our side, particularly when the conventional military establishment confronts Marighella-style warfare. Believe it or not, after decades of such confrontations, the U.S. military have yet to evolve a coherent special-warfare doctrine. You can't afford that luxury.

As you move out of junior paramilitary status into SOF professionalism, you're going to have to think in terms of overall patterns, objectives, and results. You've got to put systems in place that will effectively position your client's forces against those of the enemy. That's what's lacking in these wars: there's an extravagant amount of activity by the military but without much planning or focus. They still don't know how to deliver power on target. They aren't even sure there is a target.

Following are suggestions on targeting intermediate- or secondary-stage rural and urban GW.

Counterattacking Secondary-Stage Guerrilla Warfare

Don't underestimate the importance of recognizing the phased nature of these conflicts. Your wars will usually have been years in the making.

Initial phase of revolutionary warfare will be the quiet building of an organizational infrastructure. A few highly motivated people begin putting systems in place. Recruiting begins, manifested by agitation and propaganda. Another dimension of the primary level is what seems to be a

growing crime wave—robberies, kidnappings, murder—and in fact real criminal elements do get involved to the point that it becomes almost impossible to separate the profit motive from the political.

Chances are you won't be called in at this initial phase. The initial operational level appears to be primarily a local police problem. It can go on so long that it becomes a way of life. Take the current war in El Salvador, where I've had a client or two over the years.

The present Salvadoran war has a direct line of descent from a revolutionary movement founded in the early 1930s. It simmered quietly for years. In 1963 I became aware of a Salvadoran underground with international links when, quite by chance, I stumbled onto a clandestine training and financing operation. A decade later the underground began to emerge. Several of El Salvador's eastern regions were gradually infiltrated and taken over by the rebels. Simultaneously, violence mounted in the capital.

In early 1977 the revolutionaries shifted to the type of military action Marighella has described—but with this significant difference: Attacks were targeted solely against civilians and the security services, both urban and rural. The regular military were not touched—and thus remained passive—until late 1979 when the rebels shifted into the full-blown revolutionary-warfare stage.

Only then did the rest of the world wake up to the fact that El Salvador even existed. In El Salvador itself few people, including the military, realized what was engulfing them.

It's in the secondary phase that you are most likely to be retained—and it is here, too, that you can be most effec-

tive. For the rebels, this transition period is by far the trickiest and most difficult. As in Marighella's Brazil, some revolutionaries never quite make it into the third phase and find the secondary stage untenable; they fall back into reorganization and agitprop. But eventually they'll try again. Once an insurgency has eaten to the bone, it's almost impossible to eradicate . . . which is tough on the client but good for the merc business.

But if and when your opposite numbers, the revolutionary warriors, manage to escalate the conflict into the third phase—internationalized civil war—there's a good chance they'll put you out of business in that country—or at least your role will be considerably modified. Because when your little local war begins making the TV networks' evening news, U.S. officials and advisers will soon be trailing the TV cameras. One day you'll come back to your hotel lobby and see knots of crew-cut young men warily eyeing their surroundings—and you know the competition has arrived. They'll turn it into their war. For you, a true merc, their arrival means there goes the neighborhood!

First thing they'll do is undo and dismantle everything you've done. Then they'll bring in helicopters.

But until then—and afterward, when the U.S. counterinsurgency program will have inevitably failed—you can play a useful role by advising your clients on entirely different counterattack tactics. Take enclaves, those protected urban and rural sanctuaries which the enemy turns into operational bases.

One of the phenomena of this kind of warfare is the relative ease with which revolutionaries can take over key patches of real estate, both urban and rural. It's a gradual

process, lasting years, and proceeding throughout all three stages. Most governments, including the U.S., tend to see the thing as primarily a police problem. Unfortunately, the police are corrupt, ill trained, ill armed, and totally ineffective against the highly motivated guys on the other side. Whole provinces and key city neighborhoods slowly slide under revolutionary control. They not only become fortresses and bases; they become all-important terminals for outside arms and other assistance to the rebels.

Washington has always put priority on trying to cut the outside supply lines. That's fine—but *you* concentrate on knocking out those enclaves. In practical terms you'll never be able to seal off your country—but in equally practical terms you have to eliminate each and every one of those terminals if you want to save your client.

You do that by standing U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine on its head. Turf *is* important. Whenever a major revolutionary thrust has failed it has usually been because the rebels failed to develop a proper sanctuary system. When they do develop one, they can go on indefinitely, as in El Salvador. Despite a U.S. Military Group there, a vast U.S. embassy staff, who dictate the course of the war, and \$2.5 billion in U.S. aid, the Chalatenango and Morazán enclaves remain intact. In the capital, whole neighborhoods are effectively rebel dominated, including the city's central market area.

But any self-respecting mercenary adviser would rather be caught dead than permit such a situation to develop for his client. Specifics? Damn right.

First, move your troops out of those barracks, bases, camps, headquarters, airfields, garrison towns. Move them

into the field—and stay there. You want to deny one key factor to the enemy: advance intelligence. Engrave this in bronze on your memory: Every move you make—you and your client's troops—from those barracks and base areas is being monitored by the enemy. And from within as well.

Every time a plane or helicopter is launched, its flight heading and number is noted and forwarded by agents among the street people clustered around the airfields. Every time an unmarked patrol car leaves security headquarters, kids lounging around outside note its license, color, and make—and alert the neighborhood to which it is heading. You can change plates, repaint the car every few days; makes no difference. Those kid spies will spot your covert patrol before it gets out the gate.

Same for army units. Your convoy comes roaring out of camp and heads north by Highway 12. The guerrilla leader up there knows about it before the last truck gets through the gate—and probably well before; the other side has both civilian and military personnel working for them in all your major barracks and bases. Count on it.

In fact, Western-trained armies do everything but buy advertising space to proclaim forthcoming operations. Besides the obvious buildup and movements, invariably there'll be aerial reconnaissance and scouting, followed by increased patrolling, followed by air and artillery bombardment. The guerrillas have the luxury of deciding well in advance whether to withdraw, stage a series of ambushes—or even counterattack the home turf of the attacking force. More often, the two sides dance a minuet. The army moves into an area. The guerrillas move out. The army moves back out. The guerrillas move back in.

Helicopters represent the very worst factor in this dopey dance. They are enormously expensive—and not only in terms of purchase and maintenance. They also tie up too many of your best people in servicing and protecting them. They're too expensive—and vulnerable—to be based where they're most needed. You have to put them way back in your main base area—thus guaranteeing you'll telegraph every move you make.

So start shedding.

If you must have helicopters, use them not as troop carriers or even gunships, but as utility and medevac vehicles. Dump your artillery. Strip down to weapons no heavier than 81-mm mortars and 50-caliber MGs. Invest in snipers and sniper rifles and heavily armed small units. And dump fixed positions. Get out of the barracks and out into the boondocks on the peripheries of those rural enclaves, shifting constantly. Move your people out of security headquarters and into the middle of those urban enclaves—and keep them there.

Literally set up shop in these urban enclaves. Take over bars and restaurants, grocery stores, employment agencies, laundry and dry-cleaning establishments. Rent yourself a spy system—we'll cover this in more detail in a subsequent section—consisting of street people, kids, taxi drivers, beggars, and the like. And have your people join the public and semipublic rebel political support groups that always spring up seemingly overnight in these situations. You'll find direct links between them and the urban underground; follow them up.

Don't delay your operations in the expectation of making one sudden mass arrest. Start arresting and interrogat-

ing. Leads will open up surprisingly fast. Install a robot phone, merely a machine that records a telephoned message, and publicize the number. You'll find that as pressure mounts so will the calls to your robot phone and tips on terrorists. Apply maximum pressure inside the enclave. And don't ease up. Your enclave will begin to come unglued.

Sooner or later you'll scoop up the Godfathers—the enclave's key people. They and the cadres and other organization men are the real infrastructure you must take out. It is they who must be targeted. Be gentle with the small fry. You can probably even turn them around.

In the field, if you can use main-force conventional units to crush rebel enclaves, do so—even if you have to strip your garrisons. However, you may well find your regular units are pure mush. If you lack the strength to go head to head with the enemy, buy time for reorganization and training. Keep your main force in place while you crash-program small-unit development. And snipers.

You'll find that the guerrillas are raising hell with the economy by cutting power lines. They strike at night. But you don't have enough conventional troops to protect the power poles and pylons they destroy. Invest in night vision technology. Stake out the poles nightly with two- or three-man sniper teams for each two or three poles. Well-placed shots from the darkness may go a long way toward ending the practice. But don't use all your snipers in the defensive mode. Start infiltrating them into the enclave.

Next, pour in your crack mobile teams, small commando units operating from shifting bases along the periphery. Their initial mission should be intelligence. Then

deliver raids and ambushes of mounting intensity. These highly trained strike units are your cutting edge. Finally, send in your regular battalions . . . and be prepared to homestead the place.

Your people have to vow and swear to the villagers that they, the troops, are there to stay—and will protect the villagers (even though locals who choose to live for years in long-established enclaves can be presumed to be basically prorebel). And then begin interrogation. We must meticulously separate the wolves from the sheep. The wolves we make disappear. The sheep we protect—and cautiously encourage and enable them to protect themselves. We organize armed civil defense units and civic action community programs—but always backed up by firepower.

Because we know that someday the bad guys will be back. That's another thing we can count on. Another certainty: They'll be back with increasingly sophisticated techniques, technology, and tactics. They're constantly improving. And if you want to stay in the game, you'll have to escalate right along with them.

Paper Chasing

What is one self-destructive trait common to regulars and irregulars alike? It's a compulsion to put down on paper sensitive or incriminating information and take those papers into situations where they might be seized by the enemy.

The practice is against all the rules. Leaders of both regular and irregular units alike condemn the carrying of classified material as one of the deadliest sins of this kind

of conflict. It is denounced as the mark of rank amateurism. . . .

But take a look at some of those sinners.

Britain's elite SAS Regiment is justly famed as probably the world's finest combat unit. But all the reverential accounts of the regiment's prowess fail to dwell on one small dim chapter of regimental history. That's the story of SAS urban patrols in Belfast, Northern Ireland, in the mid-1970s.

SAS troopers in civilian clothes manned unmarked cars and fanned throughout the city in search of the IRA. Instead, the IRA found them. One of the SAS cars had a disabling collision in the city's tough, IRA-controlled Ardoyne district. The driver fled the scene—leaving behind, for the IRA to find, a trove of intelligence files and photographs of IRA suspects. The IRA command flashed an alert. IRA cars began to ram suspected SAS patrol cars all over the city—and invariably the SAS drivers were carrying documentation so sensitive that it laid bare British intelligence operations throughout Belfast.

What it came down to was that the SAS men simply couldn't mentally absorb all the material thrown at them. To function, they had to have immediate reference materials. And it led to disaster.

You'll probably encounter this problem: You shift people from a purely military function into police intelligence operations and your paperwork will go out of control. A veteran cop can have imprinted on his memory the face, name, and basic ID of literally hundreds of suspects. Your soldiers can't. Their memories aren't that good and they don't think like police. Equally, police aren't soldiers—but

as the world moves relentlessly into a blend of urban-rural warfare, people are needed who can function in both capacities. But make your military police do their homework back at base. No excuse is good enough to allow a scrap of sensitive documentation into the street or field.

The ultimate sin is to take along on a special operations mission any material that could compromise your secret friends in the target country . . . and then to abandon the material intact to the enemy. That's what Delta Force, modeled on SAS, did in 1980 in the aborted Iran rescue mission. Top secret documents were left behind at Desert One.

Irregulars are gripped by that same compulsion. Third Worlders, however, almost never set anything on paper if it's strictly an "inside job"—a palace coup, for instance, or a barracks revolt. Those are strictly by personal contact. Another thing is that they very rarely put in print the sort of material so eagerly sought by Western intelligence agencies: master plans for covert operations, tables of organization and equipment, staffing of clandestine networks. That sort of thing is a Western intelligence fetish not operative in the Third World.

However, Third Worlders, regulars and irregulars alike, enjoy paper chasing almost as much as their Western counterparts—even though much of the material is well below the threshold of Western analysis or even interest. But it should be of interest to you; it can get you killed.

Rule 1 with your paperwork: Keep it to a bare minimum—and remember that whatever you put on paper for internal consumption may also be read by the hostiles who will eventually replace your present patrons. That could be em-

barrassing, even lethal. Keep thinking: Who's going to inherit those files?

Rule 2: Whenever you go out on any exterior mission, refuse to carry anything that might compromise you. I say "refuse" because your patron and often your colleagues as well will likely try to saddle you with unwanted ID, messages, even propaganda. It's your right to refuse. Or simply leave it behind. I've seen important missions blown because some idiot allowed another idiot to stuff a few leaflets in his pocket.

Of course, almost every such job requires a certain amount of paperwork. You may be required to absorb too much data to rely solely on your unassisted memory.

Here's a technique I commend to you. Condense the material, whatever it is, down to a bare minimum. Concentrate on it, really zero in. As you do, devise a shorthand system. Using single words meaningful only to you, letters, numbers, squiggles, and doodles, you relate those prompters to the info. Lay out your prompter symbols in careful logical sequence so that one prompter helps recall the next. You should be able to reduce your shorthand to a single sheet of paper. It takes practice, but you'll find you can work out something similar—and if you concentrate on relating your squiggles and numbers to entire concepts, you won't need incriminating paper. Primitive as hell, sure, but it works.

The only problem, at least for me: I have to bring along that prompter sheet. Without it, I'm lost. But it's easy to destroy in a crisis. In any case, never take with you paper that an enemy might consider clearly more important than

you yourself. If you're captured, that makes you eminently disposable. Here's an example.

An airborne and seaborne guerrilla invasion of the Dominican Republic was launched from Castro's Cuba. I was sent to the north coast target area with a small elite Dominican unit and a force of foreign mercenaries. The situation was chaotic for both sides. The conventional Dominican regulars milled around excitedly, shooting at everything that moved, including each other. Their counterparts in the air force ranged up and down the coast, bombing villages; they hit not a single guerrilla, to my knowledge, but they did manage to kill hundreds of civilians.

The half-trained guerrillas were no better. They soon lost any semblance of organization and in twos and threes they were hunted down and killed or captured. We turned the prisoners over to the regulars. The troops marched the prisoners off into the sunset and, I soon learned, oblivion. When I later managed to take stock of the prisoner situation for interrogation purposes, I found seven survivors. They suddenly dwindled to four. Then three, of whom I managed to talk to two. And then there was one.

He was Delio Gómez Ochoa, major in the Cuban Army and the only survivalist in the lot. Gómez Ochoa was chattering nonstop, an engaging feature in a prisoner. He was also the only member of the invasion force who had no ID or other documentation. That also made him interesting. Both facts, and his rank, kept him alive.

The other poor bastards had come unknowingly bearing their own death warrants. They were loaded with documentation. Everything from ID cards to lists of secret sym-

pathizers were found on their persons. They carried official correspondence, codebooks, maps, files, everything. A surprising number of the men had detailed personal diaries.

With all those stacks of goodies—plus an eagerly cooperative senior officer for reference if needed—there was no real need for in-depth interrogation. So my patrons felt free to do what to them came naturally. . . .

And Delio Gómez Ochoa himself survived my patrons. He was eventually freed and was last seen heading for Cuba. Wherever he is, I hope he realizes his cooperative chatter helped doom his own men. And you, in turn, Joe, I hope you realize that the incident was typical Third World—and you may someday find yourself in the same situation. . . .

PART 4

Advanced Mercenary Occupational Specialization

It's the oldest maxim in the marketplace: Find a need and fill it. And if you've been doing your homework—reading some of the better military journals—you'll be aware that there is a hell of a market out there for new concepts, systems, ideas, regarding what the regular military call low-intensity conflict (LIC).

—A Marine general writes that maybe what's going on in the world is the Third World War—but we don't recognize it.

—A 1985 symposium of LIC experts at the Air University warned that the U.S. was no more ready for another 1980 Iranian situation in 1985 than it had been back then.

—A top Pentagon official told a military journal that the Department of Defense has no more than an “intuitive” sense of what special ops and LIC is all about.

—The old two-army issue has exploded again. Does the U.S. need a separate service of special operations forces? The debate has now spilled over into a congressional inquiry.

—A bold colonel has come out and stated that the military have already been overtaken by events, that the armed forces lack the resiliency to cope with LIC and have become an “anachronism.” New institutions must and will arise to meet the challenge.

Don't say it out loud, but the colonel is probably right. The regulars have had forty years of participating, observing, and advising in LIC situations and they still don't know what it's all about. They are programed to deal in blacks and whites, war and peace, victory and defeat, enemies and allies. LIC is all blurred and vague. You can't tell the good guys from the bad and the police function has become scrambled with the legitimate military role.

What is dangerous is that most so-called LIC experts will tell you that each LIC situation is unique. It has to be dealt with on a piecemeal, ad hoc basis. Thus there can be no overall strategy or doctrine. And thus there can only be *reaction* to each situation. The military are thus forced back to a passive defensive posture. And the lack of any doctrine to shape organization, training, equipment, targeting . . . means you don't even have a proper force in readiness even to react.

The fact that they have seen no evolving pattern to LIC is enough by itself to disqualify them from serious consideration as genuine experts. That pattern is clearly visible even to fairly novice paramilitaries. They haven't been programed in the blacks and whites.

What it comes down to, Joe, is that the regulars have already been up to bat. And they struck out. Your kind of conflict is what is shaping the modern world. It's not even a new form of warfare. LIC is timeless but with a modern twist. And it has shape, form, strategy, tactics. And like all warfare, it evolves. Unfortunately, the regulars haven't. While they wait for their "real war," events have passed them by. They are indeed "anachronistic."

New institutions will arise, whether official or private,

and will move into the void. What they will need is true experts in this "new" warfare. So now start thinking in terms of an advanced mercenary occupational specialty, an MOS best suited to you and to LIC.

Section 1:

Techno-Commando Tactician

Uruguay's Tupamaro terrorists—the intellectuals of the global political underworld—invented a term that has come to be an important feature of worldwide terrorist strategy.

The term is *coyuntura*. It means the coming together or merging of diverse elements into a single whole. The Tupas calculate the convergence of developments in devising strategy. It means precise timing. It means careful adaptation of tactics to the situation. It means precise targeting of vital points in that situation.

This could be the era of *coyuntura* for the techno-commando. Special operations—special operators—have become the only effective response to the revolutionary warfare that is installing in power one hostile regime after another, each in turn serving as base for still another revolutionary warfare offensive. Forty years of conventional counterinsurgency response have been forty years of failure. The potential for special operations always existed. The will to use them did not.

That seems to be changing. One senses a new mood in the West and among its Third World allies: not only fear but growing frustration.

We have the human raw material for special ops—have it in abundance. But it lacks a doctrine, leadership, a sense of its own immense latent power. That, too, may be changing.

And certainly the relevant technology has been achieved—a modern four-man techno-commando unit could project the firepower of an entire World War II battalion—and more is coming on stream as you read this. Never before have so few had so much power to inflict destruction on so many.

Put it together and you have the *coyuntura* of the techno-commando—the new warriors of the twenty-first century.

But where are the tacticians for the new warfare? Certainly not among our conventional commanders. They're not even sure the Third World war is real warfare. They don't even have a real name for what's happening out there. . . .

Clarifying Your Nomenclature

Let's start this by grappling with a point so crucial that it's been a major factor in paralyzing Western military response to the type of warfare with which the West can't cope.

The problem is nomenclature.

The West is still fumbling, after forty years of all this, for names and labels to affix to what's happening. Mercenaries, who should know better, are themselves confused by the semantics of their own profession.

So what name does one put to conflicts which include: guerrilla warfare, terrorism, psychological warfare, espio-

nage, commando operations, assassination, sabotage, contraband and crime, extortion, sniping . . . ?

The late Bernard Fall, a brilliant observer and analyst of this subject, tried to resolve the nomenclature problem way back in 1962.

"Nobody can decide on even the name for this type of war we are trying to fight," he complained, noting use of such terms as "shadow warfare, unconventional warfare, sublimited warfare, irregular warfare, fourth dimensional warfare, subterranean warfare, political warfare, submarine warfare, secret warfare, and so on."

Bernard Fall made this proposal:

"Mao Tse-tung calls it revolutionary warfare. And since none of the other name-inventors can challenge Mao's pre-eminence on the subject, I suggest we give the devil his due. Let's call it revolutionary warfare and be done with it. Revolutionary warfare is the type of warfare we were unready to wage."

So be it. And it was. Revolutionary warfare came to be considered the last word in progressive military thinking. However, the term obscured two key facts: (1) it was Communist military doctrine—not revolutionary warfare per se—and (2) it was designed solely for use against non-Communist states. It took us a long time to understand that.

Some of us, particularly the French, never did understand that revolutionary warfare is *not* a double-edged sword.

Transition: La Guerre Revolutionnaire Becomes Shock Warfare

The French seized upon *la guerre revolutionnaire*—first as a name, then as a doctrine, finally as almost theology. Young French military officers—Jean Lartéguy's "Centurions"—studied Mao's scriptures as if they were holy writ. As did we all. Then we went from Mao to Marighella seeking the secret truths denied those bureaucrats in Paris, London, and Washington.

But still we lost.

La guerre revolutionnaire could not be turned around. Sure, it's strong stuff, a powerful doctrine that has destroyed empires—the West's empires. The other empire has remained intact; hell, we can't even cope with Nicaragua.

In its original form rev-war is of no use to us. As part of a composite it is. So now we're writing our own doctrines. There is a *third* strategy of conflict, eclectic and pragmatic. And it's here now!

What is happening is a growing realization in the trade that the old rules of engagement, taken for granted for several hundred years, are no longer operative. Conventional armies have lost their monopoly on making war—a development both technological and political. An enormous psychological factor is also involved: the Third World is growing in military self-confidence while the West is no longer sure it even recognizes the modern face of war.

Small units are now capable of projecting increasingly destructive force. Large units and their heavy machinery of war are increasingly vulnerable to that force. Compact power is now what counts. And the readiness to apply

power. Western governments and their publics are increasingly lacking in that will—but that is demonstrably *not* decreasing the level of violence. It is merely becoming more oblique and unofficial. And new rules of engagement have already been written, unofficially, between the great powers inhibiting the use of maximum force by their respective proxies. Even so, the level of violence, oblique or not, is slowly, steadily escalating.

In all of this, the main-force armies of both West and East are largely bystanders. They are in gridlock, making modern warfare for them largely a spectator sport. They have yet to find their niche, or even define their new role in an altered world.

Meanwhile, those small groups are developing—and beginning to apply—their own doctrines. Call them terrorists, guerrillas, mercenaries, proxies, whatever, they are adapting techniques not from conventional forces; instead, the new form of warfare is being spun off from special operational forces of East, West, and the Third World. The modern mercenary, be he state-sponsored or a wild card, is a direct product of this process. And so is his doctrine—which is nothing more than a meld of special operations and terrorism. But it is *neither* terrorism nor special operations in the popular sense. It's simply modern warfare, heavily focused on shock tactics . . . tactics made necessary by modern conflict's increasingly clandestine nature.

Since people realize the madness of throwing nuclear weapons at each other—and also fear conventional military solutions—it was inevitable that they'd simply find another way to wage war. And they have.

What it comes down to is special operations executed by

highly motivated, well-trained, small assault teams striking from out of the unknown against carefully selected targets—and seemingly without official sanction or connection, a fiction more or less becoming acceptable among players of the game.

This is the great phenomenon of our age: the collapse of the monopoly by the official conventional military on the tactics and technology of warfare. The military institutions of the great powers are gridlocked into their heavy machinery: ballistic missile systems, armored armies, battleships, carriers, bombers . . . while the paramilitary thrives in a separate dimension below the threshold of heavy weapons.

But not below hi-tech. The new techno-commandos now emerging can tap the same technology revolutionizing modern life. He can be equipped with miniaturized weaponry, miniaturized explosives delivery systems, miniaturized communications units. He has access to new food concentrates and special lightweight gear enabling him to support himself for long periods in the field. As tiny, highly motivated, highly trained teams, techno-commandos are designed to maneuver like raiding submarines, darting to the attack in swift, powerful strikes. They are the equivalent of the big battalions of yesteryear.

They need have no contact with base or headquarters—and no visible link with state or government. There need be no constant resupply. No centralized control. Freed of fatal connections and impedimenta, they are both effective and deniable.

What it all means is that this is the advent of the techno-commando.

Basic principle of the game is that it be played by surrogates, and a major reason the game is not farther advanced is the lack of skilled players. Not even the military elite have proved very effective in this role. And their deniability is slipping. The trend is to the private sector and to diverse nationalities.

The only thing keeping the game reasonably civilized so far is that it's still played according to rules—rules that limit the level of violence and restrict targets. The rules are enforced by the power elites of East and West through their respective clandestine services. But a certain amount of loosening of control is evident. The big agencies are getting sloppy. The Third Worlders have yet to break that last colonial control—but they're working on it.

Technological surrogate warfare is an obvious next step in this progression—a development that may well be South-North rather than East-West. But leave that problem to them. It is important that you *not* try to take that technological next step. At least not a full step. Go no farther than inching forward into applying those new *miniaturized weapons and hi-tech equipment to the commando mode* of your tactical units. To go farther is to risk obliteration.

Don't complain. You had the good fortune to get your calling at a time when you're most needed, a time when conventional military structures are becoming irrelevant.

So what the friendlies of the Third World need from their Western mercenaries is expertise in shock warfare. Your contributions in logistics and basic infantry training are useful—but not crucial. *There's no real market for*

mercs as mere trigger pullers. And no one is going to take you seriously as a guerrilla guru.

But if you come into the mercenary marketplace with spec qualifications in the new warfare, you can command top dollar. Your mercenary occupational specialization may be in one narrow facet of these special operations: night combat, for instance, or sniping operations. Or you may achieve a less-specialized status as shock warfare tactician.

And always you'll function in a dual capacity: intelligence officer as well as commando. Forget the rules and lock intelligence directly into operations. Remove the barriers between internal and external security. And don't separate intelligence analysis from intelligence collection—or from operations either. The operational commander should be your real and final intelligence analyst.

This is possible only because you, Joe, can work outside the traditional command structure are freed from the bureaucracy—and because you're still untainted by exposure to the norms of those structures. Techno-commando or not, you're a primitive. So are your wars. Stay that way and you'll get along just dandy.

And you're probably a natural for the two oldest, most primitive—and most effective—tactics in warfare. . . .

Your Basic Offensive Action: Raids and Ambushes

Specialize in raids and ambushes and you'll be into the essence of modern conflict.

They're the oldest form of warfare. Today those twin tactics—in their almost infinite variations and modes—are

more devastating than ever in military history. And they're the kind of thing you, not the regulars, do best.

Basic close assault techniques have remained unchanged by the advent of air power, artillery, and mechanization. Instead, the heavy weaponry and machinery have rendered defenders even more vulnerable to attack by raiders and ambushers. Now, as in antiquity, the assault is delivered at close range with maximum speed and power—and technology now sharply enhances that speed and power.

In night attack, particularly, you now have going for you the new auto weapons and night vision equipment. Day or night, small assault units can deliver a punch-out of all proportion to their numbers. *Raids and ambushes are your only viable response to enemy mass.*

The new night-vision and sensory technology add another dimension to traditional raid-and-ambush tactics. It also means that the night no longer belongs to the guerrilla and the terrorist. Their monopoly has been broken. What it means to you is a new market opening up, a potential new specialty. So far, true night combat specialists do not exist. But they will, and soon.

Devices like the AN/TVS-5 are becoming available to you and your clients. That particular item, night-vision goggles, is still primitive. The goggles are awkward and uncomfortable. But they'll give you adequate vision to four hundred meters in a quarter-moon sky. And better gear is coming.

So you can now think in terms of *night* raids and ambushes. You're now able to combine that action with sniper work using suppressed, night-scoped laser-directed weap-

ons—not to mention those new shoulder-fired missile systems now coming on stream.

I don't think it's an oversimplification to advise you to think tactics primarily in terms of raids, ambushes, and combinations. Their scope is infinite—yet you are not confronted by a vast and tangled maze of textbook terminology and techniques.

Most shock warfare operations can be included in those three categories. Whether a commando assault, sniper attack, blowing a bridge, blasting a fortified compound, attacking a convoy, or a lone hit, *the operation will fit in one of those three categories*—or all of them. And they are the type of operations best suited to you temperamentally and professionally.

And if and when it does come down to set-piece field battles, you'll find plenty of otherwise surplus colonels and generals around. *It's shock warfare tacticians who are in short supply.*

This tactical triad is, of course, the essence of urban terrorism. The same may be said of guerrilla warfare. Shock is also basic to classic commando ops. The triad is all of them—and more. Shock attack is a composite of the familiar systems. We caught glimpses of it in the attacks on the U.S. embassy and Marine compound in Beirut. *You can expect this composite to escalate and accelerate in the years ahead.* It's a whole new form of warfare—so new that no one has yet figured out an adequate response . . . even though the basic concept is as ancient as man.

Speed-Concealment-Accuracy

The essence of shock assault is that combat and psychological warfare become one. Of all the masters of this warfare, ancient and modern, perhaps that strange genius T. E. Lawrence, "Lawrence of Arabia," best typified application of shock.

In his World War I campaigns against the Turks in Arabia, Lawrence waged what he called a war of detachment. The Turks knew he was out there somewhere with his raiders. They didn't know where—or when he would strike again. They were forced into a defensive posture over thousands of square miles.

Lawrence remained concealed until he selected his target and attacked with blinding speed. And in each attack his mobile units achieved concentration of force in the target area, overwhelming the isolated Turkish units. Then he withdrew his raiders into the unknown with equal speed.

Lawrence tried never to allow his operations to fall into a predictable pattern. He employed calculated caprice. His tactics were erratic—sometimes even irrational. But they worked. Enemy intelligence and command never knew what to expect.

Personnel selection for Lawrence's strike forces was limited to the desert's military elite. His type of operation demanded quality, not quantity. And the same is true today. Speed-concealment-accuracy is still the essence of special operations—and it still eludes the world's General Motors-type military establishments.

The message for modern mercenaries is to build your operation around tiny, highly mobile elite units. So, as always, think small. God is no longer on the side of the

biggest battalions. They're out of date in today's conflicts. And they're not your style anyway. Think in terms of fire teams. And snipers.

Sniper Operations

Consider this: *The deadliest man in any army is the sniper.*

He is also the most feared. And not only by the enemy. In peacetime, Western military establishments virtually disband their sniper elements—and your little warlord will be just as leery. Snipers make people nervous. And with good reason.

He is the epitome of precision targeting and shock. A handful of snipers can demoralize whole cities and disrupt entire operational areas. *In proportion to manpower and firepower, dividends from sniper ops are the highest in warfare.* And there is virtually no human target anywhere who can be totally immunized against a precisely placed, long-range shot from a sniper rifle.

Yet, the sniper is woefully underutilized. In your most probable operational area, *true* snipers are even rarer than in Western armies. In the Third World a sniper is a guy perched on a hill or rooftop who throws rounds at everything that moves. Occasionally he hits a military target. He's not much more than a dangerous nuisance.

All of which adds up to a market for you, Joe. If you understand what sniper operations are all about—and their potential—our more desperate Third World leaders will be more than receptive to your sales pitch. The product you're selling is a package: yourself—as instructor and

tactician—and your ability to enlist other experts and procure the latest arms and technology.

What about you yourself as a sniper? Negative. Snipers need professional backup in terms of logistics and intelligence. They require commanders who know what they're doing and how to handle snipers. You won't have that—yet. The local level of expertise on both sides is probably limited to shooting at goats and school buses.

(However, remember: Even amateur snipers kill. Troops and even civilians adjust amazingly fast to *inaccurate* sniper fire—but the nonchalance evaporates when, sooner or later, somebody gets drilled through the head.)

Another thing about sniping . . . it's one of the rare areas of guerrilla-type warfare where you probably have a slight but distinct natural edge over your Third World counterparts. As hunters and rifle buffs, Americans and the rest of the English-speaking community are a vast potential talent pool of expert riflemen. The U.S., in particular, is a nation of technically minded gunners. American and Canadian rifle teams consistently outshoot the rest of the world.

But there is a heap more to sniping operations than winning shooting matches. Take the sniper himself. Natural snipers are rare in any culture. They're also a curious mix of personality traits. In fact, a good sniper—like a good demo man—is usually a bit weird. That's all right; he can afford to be a little feisty. A good sniper knows he's good. If you're looking for sniper material, his profile would be something like this:

Strong motivation.

Killer instincts.

Intelligence.

Calm, unemotional personality.

Patience and persistence.

Agility, strength, endurance.

Trustworthy, self-disciplined.

A loner.

Special age group: not younger than twenty-five, not older than thirty-five. Youngsters tend to fire too soon; oldsters not to fire at all.

Of course, you have to beware of crazies—and they're drawn to sniper action. But you do need very special people for sniper slots. He goes out and stalks his prey for days. Or waits silently at a stakeout. Then he lines up a complete stranger in his sights and carefully shoots him dead. And does it again and again.

So he expects special attention. Give it to him. It's your job to accommodate him if you can. Snipers require careful handling and much depends on the interaction between the commander and sniper.

Snipers can be deployed in almost any situation, defensive as well as offensive. Sniper screens spotted before a position or facility are more to be feared by the enemy than passive infrared sensory devices. You'll find them invaluable in those raids and ambushes you're going to master. Ranging behind enemy lines in two- or four-man teams, they can be enormously disruptive. More important, if your intelligence has been doing its job, you can zero in

your long-range killer teams at the enemy's most important human assets.

That's what you tell your patron if he balks at the thought of having lethal people like them around. He'll come through. Now it's up to you. Contact a full-service brokerage operative in Europe (see Part 4) and let him know you're in the market for veterans of the French and German counterterrorist units; they're probably the world's top sniper experts. Another source is the old USMC, the only U.S. service that has consistently stressed sharpshooting and has this country's only permanent military sniping school.

The premise of the Marine school is that "the most dangerous thing on the battlefield is a single well-aimed round." True—and not only on battlefields.

The same is true of your basic strike force unit.

Assault Diamonds

What do the following have in common?

—Britain's Special Air Service

—The IRA

—The U.S. Marines

—The Tupamaros

—Carlos Marighella

—Leka I, King of the Albanians

All of them advocate a basic, three-to-five-man combat unit. The SAS employs what it calls "bricks," four-man teams that operate in pairs, one pair covering the other. The Tupas use four-man cells. The IRA deploys its best fighters in four-man Active Service Units. Marighella's bible on urban guerrilla warfare prescribes four-man self-

contained units. King Leka, to be different, uses the three-man triad. The U.S. Marines' basic unit is the four-man fire team—and its basic deployment is in the classic diamond formation. And that was the name selected by a motley crew of exiles with whom I recently worked.

Diamonds. They have a proven track record in our kind of conflict. I commend them to you.

What most of the above organizations also have in common is that they feel a compulsion to tinker with their basic diamonds. They expand on the diamond. They increasingly restrict its autonomy. They submerge it in larger formations. They misuse it. Leka's triads are the only such formations that consistently maintain unit integrity.

There are excellent reasons why higher authority tampers constantly with cellular-type strike forces. Conventional military officers think in terms of big battalions—and they don't like or trust special elite formations anyway. Political leaders and secret services are also leery of their own diamond-type formations. Too much power can be packed into tiny, insulated cells.

Just for the fun of it an associate of mine once drew up a detailed plan showing how a four-man team could paralyze New York City. Other examples could be cited.

Tiny units of highly trained, highly motivated combatants insulated from outside penetration or control are the formations of the immediate future. They can be adapted to almost any conflict environment. They are the core unit on which you should build your systems.

Note: Don't get carried away, Joe. No city busting for you. Try it . . . and you'll bring down on your head and

that of your patron the collective wrath of both sides' clandestine services. A very complex and delicate convergence was cut on this exact thing many years ago. It's still very much operative. Not to worry: you'll plenty of other applications for your diamonds.

One of them will be to target enemy assets of psychological importance.

Psywar Ops

Let's understand what we're talking about.

(1) You are operating in the Third World. (2) You, by your very nature, are neither needed nor wanted until the conflict situation has become desperate. (3) That means you are dealing with people and a situation in which what counts is *not* persuasion—but the visible application of power, whether your side's or the enemy's.

Your best psy-op is that which seems to demonstrate to the enemy as well as your people that the enemy has lost control of the situation. You can be pretty sure that by the time you go in, the bad guys have had things going their way. And you're not going to reverse that with words alone.

Remember . . . you're *not* going up against an open Western society or one of the West's sloppy, half-assed Third World client states. You're going up against rebels or a regime which is totalitarian in the absolute sense of the word. Don't try guerrilla theater on those guys. Forget hostage situations.

As for civic action—helping the peasants seed their fields, building schoolhouses for the kids, curing the ill—it's noble in concept. One would certainly grasp any oppor-

tunity to "build bridges to the people." Unfortunately, building that bridge takes too long and it is too easily blown. Your opposition gives lip service to civic action—but he practices "grab 'em by the balls and yank. Their hearts and minds will follow." And damned if they don't!

Your best propaganda is what is variously called "propaganda of the deed," "armed propaganda," and, perhaps most aptly, "action propaganda." You couple threats and promises with action! You may—and should—alternate the lag time between words and action. But you always should be able to back up what you say. Words—agitation and propaganda—mean nothing by themselves where you're going. Your target audience trusts only its own senses. It wants to see and feel and hear and perhaps even smell results.

Sample psy-op:

Your conflicts always throw up little local despots in the countryside. They may be the rural police chief, a militia captain, guerrilla leader, even a local religious figure. They may be on either side. Or no side. What they have in common is that they're vicious, detested by the local people they oppress. Select one. Take him out. Visibly. Hoist his body in the village square.

And, of course, broadcast the fact. Now you're really in the hearts-and-minds business.

Your best medium: radio. It reaches even the most remote jungle and mountain villages as well as the towns and cities. A newspaper would be nice to have, a little house organ both informative and to set "the party line." The same for leaflet material. But think well what you're about

before you have people trying to distribute them in totalitarian territory, whether it be held by a regime or rebels. You don't want to get them killed for minimal returns.

And screen all your verbal output. The enemy will. Your written and spoken words are clues to your thinking, even your plans. Watch it.

Be fairly truthful in your direct verbal output—but balance that with a rumor factory churning out half-truths and pure fantasy to your network of informants. Here you can be creative. In fact, all your psy-war should be creative—and aggressive.

Not for you any cold, colorless recitation of facts. You're not the Voice of America, Radio Free Europe, Radio Martí. . . . Come on strong. *Speak passionate truths!* Feel free to indulge in color, symbolism, folklore, histrionics, and invective! You have to not only inform—you also must entertain.

But never forget: Third worlders are realists. They have to be. They've been exposed to the application of raw power all their lives. They want to survive. They'll accommodate whoever is able to apply the most power.

Which means, of course, that your best psy-op is a possibly small but *visible victory*. You've got to win one for a change, man!

Precision Targeting

Linger long enough in the more primitive tropics and you'll witness scenes something like the following:

Drunk and/or crazed campesinos go at each other with machetes. They hack each other into bloody ribbons of

flesh—but both *macheteros* remain standing, still swinging their blades wildly. Chances are they'll go the distance and survive. Reason: For all the wild slashing—or because of it—no artery has been severed.

W. E. Fairbairn observed a similar phenomenon in gunplay. One incident in particular triggered Fairbairn's development of a close-combat doctrine: A Shanghai police sergeant under Fairbairn pursued a suspect into a blind alley. The suspect turned and opened fire. The sergeant put six big .45 bullets into the guy—but with little effect. The suspect finally had to be beaten into submission with a pistol butt.

That sort of thing is common. You can inflict massive damage on your enemy but still not take him out of action. In contrast, a single well-placed round, of any caliber, will terminate the strongest human. And that is your objective. You're not getting paid to make bloody messes like the above.

And the value of pinpoint accuracy is not confined to individual close combat. It's even more important for unit action. The regulars may never be able to achieve precision targeting—but you must. You don't have the reserves or resources to do otherwise.

You've grown up in an historical context in which the way the great wars were waged seemed the natural order of things. They were grisly, stupid wars of attrition. Our side won by throwing great masses of money, men, and materiel at the enemy. They were wars basically commanded by logisticians and politicians. They were hideously wasteful.

But we won those wars. And we've been trying for a

repeat ever since. And it hasn't worked for the past forty years.

The guerrillas and terrorists simply refuse to play our game: they never present a solid mass at which we can throw our bulk. And our side will support these expensive, wasteful wars of attrition only up to a point. They have to show results—fast. Otherwise, by our own rules, we pick up our big battalions and battleships and go home.

Guerrilla warfare itself is not much better. It's also a war of attrition, grinding on and on, consuming time, wasting lives and nations. It doesn't aim for quick, clean kills. It's a slow, messy, wasteful business. For forty years it's worked . . . but not because it is so efficient. It isn't. In fact, those guys are almost as much locked into their stereotyped system as are our conventionals.

You can't afford either system. You have neither the time nor the resources. You've got to get in, do it, and get out. That's the way it is. *You can't afford to waste anything. Least of all can you afford to kill the wrong people.* The conventionals indulge themselves in that luxury. So do the guerrillas and terrorists.

But not you. Your circumstances are such that you must be able to produce quick, clean, *accurate* kills. You do not kill the wrong people, Joe. It's not only immoral and even illegal. It's wasteful. You can't win wars that way.

"I've come to the conclusion after thirty years in the business," my old friend José Flores said recently, a consummate professional even if he is a sometime Agency contract merc, "that we've been wasting our time. There are forty wars going on around the world. I estimate we could settle most of them—establish real peace, save mil-

lions of lives—if we successfully targeted about a hundred people.”

“But then, Mario, you’d be out of business.”

However, he did have a point. Take my own experience in El Salvador.

Back in the spring of 1977 I was retained to investigate the wave of terrorism sweeping the country. In my final report I estimated that incipient civil war could be snuffed by snuffing ten key individuals. This wasn’t done. Instead, death squads of the right joined the left in ongoing generalized slaughter. Eight of the original ten are still alive. The end is not yet—but I flatly predict that from that original hit list will emerge triumphant the next Marxist dictators of El Salvador.

All for lack of precision targeting—and timing.

There are veteran military officers who will seriously argue with you that in true revolutionary war there can be no such thing as precision targeting—because there are no vital targets. After all, Saigon command searched vainly for a decade for a key focal point to attack. True—but you’re not Saigon command. You’re going to be paid to find and fix that target. And it exists. In all conflict there are two eternal verities:

1. *There is always a focal point*—a key link, an individual, a group, situation, location—and, with proper intelligence, it can always be identified.

2. *That focal point can be hit.* There is nothing and nobody in this world that cannot be hit.

Robert Payne, biographer of the satanic Sergey Nechayev, nineteenth century Russian nihilist, put it like this:

A very small charge of dynamite can bring a skyscraper crumbling down until it is nothing more than a heap of rubble; a single match can destroy an entire city. . . . Long ago Nechayev showed how it was possible for one man or a very small group of men to overturn a state. All that was necessary was to find the Archimedian point and exert pressure. All countries, all cities, are vulnerable.

You know what I told you about laying off cities. They’re off limits. The point is that there’s an Archimedian point in every conflict situation you’ll encounter. You have to find it. Specific examples:

A bladesman who has mastered a single lethal thrust.
A professional hitman who kills with a single shot from a .22 pistol.

A sniper who racks up ninety-four kills.

A potential saboteur who has figured out where to place a single explosive charge that could knock out the one power station which would chain react through the grid and black out an entire region.

A potential assassin-control officer who determines that a mere brigade commander, not the commander in chief, is the more productive target at a particular time, place, and circumstance.

This is heavy stuff, Joe. You can escalate it up to nihilism—which, I suspect, is where it’s heading.

This is only the bare bones of shock warfare tactics—but this is as far as I go. You’re now beginning to suspect the awesome potential inherent in advanced clandestine com-

bat. You're not unique in that. It's no secret in trade circles and hasn't been for years. People in the business, good guys and bad alike, are fully aware there's as much destructive potential at this primitive level as in any advanced technology.

So there's a shared acceptance of certain rules of engagement around the world. Those rules are constantly bent and sometimes broken . . . but never permanently fractured. The basic rule is this: *Work your wars within the framework of contempo conflict forms.* That's your basic guideline. Turn into an unguided missile, and the good guys and bad guys alike will scramble to push your destruct button.

Another basic is that you need fast, accurate intelligence—and that you use it to protect yourself from both friends and enemies. You won't be able to handle any of the foregoing without an equal capability in intelligence. That's our next objective.

But there is more to your graduation into intelligence than information collection and analysis. Much more. Intelligence means power. Power means money. You shift from an underpaid field mercenary to a profit potential as broad as the infinite scope of intelligence itself. You learn the dirty little secrets of the world—the big ones too—and your virginal idealism withers. But the parameters are down and your horizon widens. *You are into soldier of fortune status.*

But never forget your humble beginnings. Never forget that there is no such thing as pure intelligence, divorced from the crude realities of war and politics. Never isolate the intelligence function from the real world. Never con-

centrate exclusively on intelligence. It's locked into the same principles as the savage skills. Contrary to what you've probably heard, don't try to separate intelligence from direct strategic and tactical application. They are one and the same. And you, Joe, you're the same merc you were before you developed an intelligence capability—only, even more so. Because now your ability to control your own career and destiny is going to be enormously enhanced.

Here we go.

Section 2:

Shock Warfare Intelligence Adviser

You're going nowhere with your high-priced techno-commando help without intelligence—and better intelligence than what your patrons and their allies have now. You must have both—and you can!

You have the advantage now of special operational forces specifically designed to take out targets. They are not to be wasted on conventional combat. Nor even guerilla warfare. You've shed your rear echelons. You're prepared to operate outside the command structure.

And even while you developed your strike units, you gave equal attention to targeting intelligence. That system will also be specifically designed for that purpose and will be adjusted with equal precision to its Third World environment.

I promise you this: You'll find it much easier and less

complex than you think. Forget technology and the textbooks. Revert to your primitive self. Get down to our level. Activate your instincts. If you've successfully made your operational area adjustment, you've passed the most important intelligence test of all.

And no matter your specialty, it is intelligence—and how you handle it—that will be the single most crucial factor in your career.

"Intelligence is the key," says Sir William Stephenson, the legendary "Intrepid" of World War II. "It's the nervous system and brain of power."

Why, then, have the West's power systems performed so poorly in Third World wars? Few can argue with Stephenson's answer.

He warned of "the growing reliance on machinery, on technicians," for intelligence, a trend that began as World War II ended.

Even as the West went in that direction, Stephenson points out, the rest of the world was trending toward secret warfare in which man himself was the ultimate weapon. "The West invested heavily in technology while Mao and Ho applied the lessons of the guerrilla."

Result: consumer demand is for the type of intelligence product the official secret services can't produce. Nor have transplants of Western intelligence systems worked. The record is clear. So the Third World market for fast, accurate intelligence awaits you, Joe Merc. Almost anything is an improvement over what's out there now.

You should operate on two basic premises in your intelligence work. Both must operate simultaneously. The first

is that it takes power to achieve intelligence. The second is that intelligence *is* power.

You will rely on human intelligence. Your primary interest will be people not things. You manipulate your human assets by applying and demonstrating power. In the Third World, never try to separate power from intelligence.

More specifically, you've got to project the image that you are able to protect and reward your friends and destroy your and your friend's enemies. It comes down to that.

If you want to be in the spy business you have to demonstrate such capability from time to time. And there's an important corollary to that: *Your intelligence effectiveness also depends on the extent to which the information gathered can be implemented and transformed into power.* Things have to happen as a result of your information gathering, or else you'll eventually be out of business.

If too much of your intelligence just lies on the shelf, inert, your whole apparatus will soon be in the same shape. But if you can boast, "We can strike where we want when we want—and nobody can stop us," without sounding entirely idiotic, then you'll do all right in intelligence.

Those ancient *ninja* mentioned earlier were about the only clandestine system in history which could truthfully make that boast about strike capability. You'll note that they combined intelligence and espionage with assassination, sabotage, guerrilla warfare, and commando strikes. What it means is that *your tactical units are an integral component of your intelligence apparatus*—and vice versa. This violates the rules of classic Western intelligence: strict separation between (1) covert operations and intelligence

and (2) domestic internal security and foreign espionage. That's in theory only. All the major intelligence services are into domestic as well as foreign ops. And, of course, the main reason for military intelligence is to support military operations. But Western military intelligence is disasterland.

The best example of the latter is not the Marine massacre at Beirut airport. It's Grenada—our lone success in many years.

I know for a fact that the Pentagon was deeply concerned about the island at least *two years* before the October 1983 invasion. At one point Pentagon officials even toyed with the idea of covert support for an invasion by a mixed force of a few Grenadians plus a larger number of Nicaraguan and Cuban exiles—spearheaded by, of all people, Bob Denard's French mercenaries. The proposal was dropped when it was concluded resistance would be too heavy.

But when the order came for U.S. forces to hit Grenada, the attack elements lacked even basic intelligence. They went in virtually blind. Instead, the military took with them a contingent of intelligence officers to scoop up the files of the ruling New Jewel Movement to justify the invasion *after* the fact. Where was the Defense Intelligence Agency prior to October 1983? Who knows? It certainly wasn't functional on Grenada.

The Agency's blind side is a void which you can profitably fill. As always, it's a question of adjustment: you dump your round-eyed gringo intelligence paraphernalia and procedure and adjust to Third World environment.

I had to suffer years of harping on that point by a guy

who was a brilliant intelligence and operations officer. He knew his turf and people. He knew his craft. Here's where I inflict on you the gist of what the general taught me about Third World intelligence.

The General's Third World Intelligence Doctrine

"Yes, my friend." The general waved a didactic finger. "I admire your American intelligence services. Such models of efficiency! Very impressive, that fantastic technology they use. You're actually trying to replace agents with machinery—those incredible satellite surveillance systems are particularly impressive . . . but, I repeat, you are essentially old fashioned."

I denied again, strenuously and truthfully, that I had the slightest connection with anybody else's intelligence service. To no avail. Of course, there had been limited contact . . . that's inevitable. So were these lectures.

"When I worked with your people I would bring them huge quantities of reports, rumors, leaks, bits and pieces of information. Most or all of it undocumented.

"The Big Brothers would look at what I brought, listen to what I said, then they'd ask: 'Can you document this?' "

I nodded. I knew what he meant. The Agency guys always want documentation. They want something on paper which looks very official. It took me a while to realize why the obsession with official paper. It was not that the documentation itself was proof positive of anything; instead, it was physical evidence they could pass on to their superiors. If the report was wrong, it was the documentation that was wrong—not the officers or the Agency. It was the old

political game of cover-your-ass—*plus* the Agency's syndrome that stealing official state secrets is what espionage is all about.

It isn't. Believe it, Joe. *You wait for documentation in our wars and you may have a long wait; your patron may be destroyed without a single word put on paper.*

"And I would always tell the Big Brothers," the general would continue, "'You think this is nineteenth-century Europe, that I can bring you the blueprints of a battleship, the mobilization plans, maybe, of the Austro-Hungarian General Staff?'"

"Bullshit," said the general elegantly. "What they want is to give their bosses important-looking papers they can wave around at executive sessions and leak to the media. We don't work for politicians or bureaucrats. Nor for the media. However, that's not the point. The point is that your stolen-documents syndrome is just no longer relevant."

"Nobody in our countries draws up fancy staff papers for clandestine warfare. On the other hand, what they do issue is a flood of misinformation. That's accompanied by another flood of genuine leaks, rumors, and bits and pieces of real significance. It's those bits and pieces you look for and add up into a coherent pattern."

"You know what your people also said when I used to bring them our kind of intelligence? They said, 'This item could be a plant,' or 'It's only a rumor,' or 'We know that source; that guy, he's nothing.'"

"So I said, 'Damn right my material is very damn raw material. Sure, some of it is faked. Your job is to find out why it was faked—and by whom. You take a close look at rumors; maybe you can trace them. And even if they're

false they're important if enough people believe them. . . . But what do you people do: you accept or reject each item on its own merits. Maybe that's your mentality. Black and white. Hot and cold. But in our countries it's always tropical pastels. There are no absolutes. You have to take every scrap of information I give you, mush them all together, and play with them. You try to play scraps into patterns. Then you go out and get drunk and get laid and come back and play with them some more. Suddenly, you see something. Suddenly you feel something. It hits you in the head and belly.'"

I listened respectfully. I'd seen this guy in action and his voodoo intelligence doctrine worked—most of the time. He had been my teacher, friend, and partner in a number of interesting enterprises over the years. The general was basically a mercenary, an adventurer in the twilight zone of conflict. He was also the most lethal individual I have ever known.

"One thing you people always forget"—the general stared at me accusingly—"is that *nothing* can be kept an absolute secret in our countries. Secrecy, true secrecy, there is no such thing—not in your country either. That's why all the misinformation, all the diversionary maneuvers, all the static and verbiage. It's a smokescreen. We hope to complete our operation before the other side sees through that smokescreen."

"And they or we will see through it eventually. The other side does the same thing we do: add up our stories, our plants, everything . . . and they'll figure out what we're up to."

"That means we have to work fast. No time for a lot of

elaborate preparation. No committees, no group action. We don't tip off the opposition by excessive intelligence attention to a particular area or situation. No fancy staff work. Undercover ops we keep simple, even primitive. And fast, always fast. Not slow, slow, slow, like your people. You cannot be slow in our profession. Never.

"There's another thing," the general would conclude. "I know what your people think of me—that I'm a brutal, primitive savage. A professional killer. And I admit I play it very dirty. That's the way the game is played here. But remember this: *I never get my people killed unnecessarily. Nor do I hurt people who are not in the game.* Your people do both."

The general was right. Sloppy intelligence targeting kills a great many people, kills them needlessly. However, the general was virtually unique to his breed by even raising the point. It's a brutish business, this field we loosely call "intelligence." As its functions have blurred over the years, its secret-police role has become steadily enhanced and in some services paramount.

What you'll find, Joe, out there in the embattled Third World, is that your client's intelligence service is that in name only. It's really a local version of Murder, Inc.

States of Siege

As you read this, there are about forty different governments around the world under attack. They are in states of siege. And, obviously, they are prime markets for your dubious talents.

What they need above all is effective intelligence advisers. They just don't have the proper intelligence people.

What you see time and again is (1) local security and intelligence officers who are the president's brother-in-law or who otherwise have been selected on the basis of assumed loyalty, not competence, or (2) American-trained and oriented assets who are deeply compromised and politicized, rendering them as out of sync with the local intelligence environment as the U.S. officers themselves. (Often, too, you'll find a blend of the above—a combination that survives only because those regimes can be picked off later at leisure.)

Two things the above systems have in common: (1) they are ineffective against modern revolutionary warfare, and (2) because they don't work, the systems almost spontaneously generate their own terrorism. Those publicized "death squads" are only its most visible form.

Traditionally, the internal security function in these countries has been relegated to thugs. They are feared by the population and—contrary to simplistic reports—bitterly resented by the career military. The latter, of course, are also under close surveillance. The end result, invariably, is that the security services have been isolated from the country's mainstream even before it comes under siege—and one of the prime objectives of the attackers is to further isolate the security system by provoking state terrorism.

The goons heading the services provoke easily. Their view of conflict resolution is disarmingly simple: You kill people. So the assault begins and they do just that. The regular military at first try to stay aloof—but eventually they get dragged in. So do private political groups. Everybody gets into the killing business—reacting right on

schedule to calibrated enemy provocation—and pretty soon you have, say, an El Salvador or the Philippines. You have a bloodbath.

But it doesn't work. The killing machine grinds away but it only feeds the violence. Panic sets in among the hierarchy. There's nothing more demoralizing than when an established system fails. And in the Third World, being perceived as weak or losing is a wipeout. So your client's intelligence system begins to unravel rapidly.

That's when they ask you if you'd like a job.

Dick Daring to the rescue? No . . . it's just a job. You might be on the winning side for a change. Most likely, of course, you've got yourself another loser. But you'll give it your damndest.

Your first lesson in on-the-job training: Appearances deceive. Your new client country seems to be bulging with troops, police, guns, vehicles. It all looks very professional. The situation looks good on paper too. You outnumber the other guys eleven to one. You've got armor, artillery, aircraft; the enemy hasn't. And the civilians you talk to are genuinely worried about those bad guys out there. They don't like your gang, either, of course, and every family has some relative—an embittered young man or woman—who has either been killed by the regime or who has disappeared into the hills or the underground.

What the hell, you say to yourself, maybe we can't formally win this one—but neither can the other guys. My people can hold out indefinitely.

Don't you believe it. What you're seeing is a chimera. That whole scene could fly into fragments overnight. The institutions gluing the state together are as insubstantial as

smoke, including the military. Your population is passive. They may defend themselves to survive—but they won't attack for you.

You are in a classic situation. Your security system is frantically grinding out bodies, producing more active enemies with each body. It's feeding more recruits to the enemy while your assets dwindle and you become more isolated. Your intelligence dries up a bit more with each enemy success. And the enemy victories are possible largely because you lack intelligence. Your side is chain-reacting right into total collapse.

Your priority is to break out of this daisy-chain process. Change the pace, disrupt the rhythm. You'll have to try to reform your intelligence system. That's *numero uno*. And you've got to start showing staying power. You are dealing with people—on both sides and neither side—who firmly follow that simple survival formula: Winning isn't just the most important thing—it's the *only* thing. If you look like a winner, they're with you.

You've got to purge the security apparatus and begin anew. The old systems, the goon squads, are now outmoded. They no longer work. Also they'll bring down flak on your patron from powerful groups and governments in the West. Societies under siege are invariably labeled "dictatorships" and with that are left isolated and exposed to attack.

Are they dictatorships? By enlightened Western standards they sure as hell are. In modern totalitarian terms they are not. They're superficial, transitory, primitive, and disorganized. The old-fashioned Third World strongman types actually exercise far less individual control over the

average citizen than does the government of the United States.

Total repression in such a country is impossible. And it's self-destructive to attempt it and fail. Only in a true totalitarian state where the population is socially, economically, and politically regimented—as well as militarily—can total repression work. And you'll know the difference when you go up against one of those massively organized and controlled Marxist states. It's like hitting a stone wall.

But you, old Joe, all you have to work with is a regime that's more like a bucket of mush.

You're going to reform the security system. Where do you start? First thing you'll want to tackle is *prisoner interrogation*. The prisoner situation generally. You'll be stunned at what you find.

Interrogation

For openers on this one, recognize that you and your patron's secret police have two entirely different concepts regarding prisoner handling. To the locals prisoners are seen primarily as objects to be *neutralized*. You see them as people to be *utilized*. And you can use them—virtually every one. They'll bare their soul—and their secrets—under intelligent interrogation.

Don't believe that myth about the fanatical self-control of captured terrorists and guerrillas. *They'll talk your ear off . . . if you handle them properly.*

But what your security men do—and they'll keep doing it until you fire them—is reverse the desired sequence. They get hold of a prisoner. He immediately thinks torture and starts to talk. In fact, the mere *suspicion* of torture is

enough to spill the guts of ninety percent of your captured bad guys. But your thugs won't listen. That's a fact! *Until you take things in hand, you'll find that some prize has been captured—but those apes have beaten him to death before you get a chance to talk to him.*

This is partly due to stupidity. Partly to sheer sadism. But fear is also a very real factor here: the secret police are afraid to let hard-core prisoners live; they expect, with good reason, a role reversal. Even so, it's gotta stop.

A little judicial questioning can go a long way even with the hard cases. You just keep at it. You alternate interrogation with white noise—check it out—and sensory deprivation. Your prisoner should also be stripped naked and made to look and feel ridiculous; a macho attitude or martyrdom complex withers fast under the right circumstances. Certain harmless drugs can help. Sometimes, too, the verbal block breaks if you pretend to work over a prisoner in the next cell or even in his presence. You produce a snappy little horror show, and you'll get results.

Does the above appall you? If so, you're too easily shaken. We haven't hurt the guy. And think of the alternative. He wouldn't be that gentle with you, you mercenary. . . .

True believers, the fanatics, the hard ones . . . they'll number less than ten percent of your prisoners. They are more important, of course, than all the others combined. These are the cadres, the prime movers. They are tough, dedicated people. You precision-target them. *You may be surprised to find they, too, can be very eloquent.* You just have to handle them a bit differently.

Keep them alive and you'll learn a lot. Talk to them one

on one and you'll learn what the other side is all about. You may be disillusioned. You'll find that, not so deep down, two factors drive them: hate and ambition. It's a vast, complex hate list—which varies with circumstances but is always basically familiar—but it's the less obvious personal-ambition factor which may surprise you.

I don't think I've ever met a pure altruist on either side of the wire. There is always another factor involved—and that other factor is usually pure ego, or the hunger to feed it. Even your martyr types will reveal unexpected depths of personal ambition and vanity. So you learn to stroke those egos. Give them the recognition they crave. At the same time give them a rationale for talking to you, however flimsy. So once again you haul out your reportorial notebook and announce you're also a paramilitary journalist. Absurd? Yes—but it works.

Here's an example.

Rafael, his name was, Rapael Faxas, and he was a poet—meaning he was unemployed—until he heard a mysterious call and was galvanized into hyperkinetic action. His transformation took place almost overnight. He became top honcho of a vast terrorist conspiracy. Going into a twenty-four-hour day, Rafael put together an organization which, among other things, came within hours of blowing up a stadium containing my patron and several thousand other people. He was a hell of a guy.

He was five feet two inches tall. He weighed about 110 pounds. His appearance was nondescript. He was a kid, twenty-three. But he was probably the most dangerous single individual I've ever met. To me he was the mad bomber

incarnate—the kind of modern zealot who is shaping our world. He fascinated me.

Our poet-bomber was captured—he had been too successful; his organization came to number in the hundreds and inevitably there were leaks—and wound up in a secret-police dungeon. There ensued a tug-of-war for him between the security goons on the one side and me on the other. I won—temporarily.

I'm not sure Rafael knew what was going on. He was in another world. He was in such a state of exaltation he sometimes leapt atop my desk to harangue me. We had very interesting one-sided conversations. All I had to do was listen, take notes, and make appreciative noises.

Amid mighty rhetoric, he boasted to an appreciative audience how he had worked night and day for the revolution. He came out with all the who, what, where, when, why, and sometimes how, information so craved by us journalists. Rafael repeatedly and proudly let fall information he had resisted disclosing under torture. He had an amazing memory. I was genuinely impressed. I told him so.

My boss was also impressed. He also told me so and expressed his appreciation in financial form.

The chief's gratitude didn't change the fact that it had been tougher keeping his goons at bay than it had been to persuade Faxas to expose his own vast conspiracy. At one point I became so desperate that I leaked Faxas's story to a *New York Times* reporter and arranged an interview. The story was front-paged. The publicity enabled me to keep my boy alive and talking. Rafael personally taught me a great deal—and partly inspired this manual.

He's dead now, of course, little Rafael Faxas. A pity we don't have more people like him on our side. Or perhaps it's just as well. There can never be a real accommodation between our kind and the zealots, however brave and talented.

However, there are plenty of other people who wind up in the enemy camp more or less by chance. *Most people in these conflicts don't have overpowering convictions or loyalties one way or another.* Your patron's security men are an example. They could just as easily have gone the other way.

The trick is, for you as your patron's security adviser, to mobilize as many useful people as possible on his behalf in the field of intelligence. Almost certainly, nobody on your side has yet tapped the potential of the local version of the Mousseblin.

Mobilize Your *Mousseblin*

It was the classic urban-rural guerrilla war of modern times: the struggle between the French Army, trying to learn and apply the lessons of *guerre revolutionnaire*, and Algeria's powerful National Liberation Front (FLN). One extremely effective organism used by the FLN, but denied the French, was the *mousseblin*—civilian street people, rabble, and their rural counterparts.

These people served as auxiliaries to terrorist and guerrilla formations. Usually unarmed, they acted as informants, guides, couriers, and human mules. Most were young, many were children. They were part of the vast population of subsistence-level people to be found in any Third World country.

And everywhere they are used, used by the other side. In Nicaragua and elsewhere in Central America, the *mousseblin* have their counterpart in the *coyotes*. They handle illegal currency transactions, contraband, whores, that sort of thing. The coyotes also formed an important intelligence and support element for the Sandinistas. Once despised, now they are an important component of the Sandinista security apparatus.

The *mousseblin* of this world are an enormous military asset. We have all seen them at work in the Far East. They number millions in Latin America. They are a powerful and growing force in South Africa. I've even seen an Irish version in Northern Ireland.

The West and Western-oriented governments have made sporadic attempts to tap this reservoir of power—or at least defuse it. They've always failed. The main reason is the sheer lack of rapport between the governed and the government in those countries. Class or economic or social differences are so overwhelming that the "them" and "us" of both sides never really converge. That's why Third World army officers never really trust their NCOs, most of them of separate social, economic, and even ethnic strata. And there is good reason on both sides for this lack of convergence. There is almost always a history of past repression, still vividly remembered, for the revolutionaries to exploit. And that repression is usually present as well as past.

This was driven home to me years ago in Algeria itself. While serving with the Sixth Fleet, I was temporarily attached to a French police station in the Algerian city of Oran. I saw indescribable scenes inside that station. The

French cops made pulp out of little Algerian whores who had merely failed to get their official permits updated. Street Arabs of all types were ruthlessly brutalized . . . swelling the ranks of the *mousseblin*.

What was significant about this brutality was its lack of focus. No real policy was involved—as in the systematic repression of a genuine totalitarian state—but instead it was merely brutal cops doing what came naturally. And never could the French police have hoped to make an in-depth penetration of the Arab lower classes, let alone mobilize even a modest level of support.

But you can't rewrite history and you're not being paid to be a social reformer (you may think so; your boss won't). You have to work with what you have—but you can modify those systems to some extent and establish new ones. As an adviser to a Third World regime, start off by being aware of two probabilities in the situation confronting you:

- 1) Neither the leaders nor personnel of that power structure will ever be able to mobilize a local version of the *Mousseblin*. Nor will they really want to.

- 2) If anybody is going to take an initiative in that direction, it'll have to be you.

And if you can't achieve anything positive in this area, you'll lose. Simple as that. You've got to mobilize private sector support—of which the *mousseblin* are crucial—or your leader is not long for this world.

Integrate Your Security Systems

Transformation of *mousseblin* into components of a security apparatus is remarkably easy to achieve. The Israe-

lis did a miniversion almost overnight in South Lebanon; Israeli advisers are creating a somewhat similar system now in Guatemala.

But nothing, of course, compares to the speed and total application of saturation security that the pro-Soviets achieve. The Sandinistas are an example. Within days after the Sandinistas took Managua, they began organizing volunteers into block, neighborhood, and village Sandinista Defense Committees—a system modeled on the Cuban Committees for Defense of the Revolution.

Let's review how it works. You'll never, of course, achieve anything like the Cuban or Sandinista model; you may, however, be able to adapt a few elements. *Remember, too, that this kind of system is being put in place all over the Marxist Third World.* Sooner rather than later, you'll also be going up *against* it.

Each block is required to have a guard on duty around the clock. All vehicles passing by are reported by make, color, and license number. The guard is also to observe which residents return home late, whether they carry packages, and if they are accompanied by friends. Every passerby is noted, every visitor investigated. Even barking dogs must be checked out.

Guards are instructed to pay particular attention to occupants of cars arriving after dark. Not the slightest incident should be ignored; family quarrels, for instance, are to be reported. Permission to move from the block must be confirmed by the guard. The departing resident must also secure a letter from the block committee before he can move—and the letter must be turned over to the committee controlling his new home before he can move. . . .

The resident is under similar surveillance at his workplace or school. His *time* and *energy* are accounted for and consumed by increasingly omnipresent mass organizations. Finally, there's no place to hide or even spare time for dissidents to do anything dastardly. And always, towering over the whole security structure, is the fact that security system members are afraid *not* to report on their neighbors. It is fear that glues the whole thing together.

Now . . . let's shift from the Third World to France—and from the revolutionary left to the unconventional military right. The same sort of doctrine has been endorsed by none other than Colonel Roger Trinquier. This guy is the high priest of *la guerre revolutionnaire* and former unofficial Godfather of French mercenaries in Africa.

Trinquier proposes what is in effect a direct adaptation of Soviet Bloc security regimentation.

Take a census of the entire population, Trinquier advises, then break it down to individual family units. The head of the household is to be held responsible for keeping current the list of residents in his home. He will report to a neighborhood official who will supervise a designated number of such heads of households. The official will, in turn, report to subdistrict leaders, and so on.

At the apex of the pyramid sit professional security officers. It will be their job to ensure that all hands, even those of dubious loyalty, participate in the process. The system, the organization, takes on a life of its own whatever the feelings of its participants. Add to that, Trinquier proposes, the leverage the organization will have if it controls distribution of food and other precious resources. . . .

What you'll end up with, of course, is an Orwellian totalitarian state, a mirror image of the system in place in such satellites as Cuba. Now, the system works; no doubt of that. But it has never worked anywhere except in hard-core Marxist-Leninist states.

For you, it's just not practical. You don't have the time or the political base or the human material to implement anything on that scale. However, you've got to be able to project power at the block-and-street level. You need access to intelligence resources at that level.

So you organize a network of your own street people. You organize your *mousseblin*. That's something you can handle. It's relatively easy to organize low-level operational networks. Your focus should be on intelligence—and you'll find plenty of potential volunteers.

Mousseblin types are not nature's noblemen. They have a common characteristic you can exploit. Whether they be Chinese or Algerians or Nicaraguans, the dwellers in the bottom stratum of the social pyramid have a trait they share with all too many mercenaries: *They are natural-born informers, snitches, finks, gossips, tattlers, etc.* Hell, they'll do it for free. You sweeten the pot with money—not too much—plus a certain mystery or mystique, a measure of security (meaning genuine no-leak confidentiality), a hint of power, plus a big dose of *recognition* . . . then you'll have yourself a rudimentary street-level intelligence system. With a hard core of professionals at the staff and command level, you could put together an organization within three to six months.

Even so, that's only one segment of your secret service. It should be regional as well as national. It must have

sharp teeth as well as keen minds. You'll need mercenaries, both local and foreign. Your patron should be prepared to spend very heavy coin.

And he has to be persuaded to consolidate the whole shooting match into a single service.

Your New Clandestine Service

The country has been going to hell in familiar fashion and you, Joe Merc, have been called in just prior to the last rites. Your patron agonized when you told him he needed a small, elite formation of techno-commandos. Troops like that are expensive and they make everybody nervous. Finally, he agreed.

You got in touch with a British group who rushed you a contingent of former SAS people and Royal Marines. You broke the national bank buying high-priced commando weaponry and technology. You crash-trained a local force officered by mercs.

Now you go back and tell the Old Man you want your own intelligence service as well. That will *not* make his day. That scares him even more than your lean, mean diamonds—but he just might agree to your proposal. He'll be persuaded less by you than by the alternative. . . .

Now . . . take your commandos and merge them directly into the table of organization of your proposed new secret service. Your commandos will serve as the command nucleus of your new service. They will also function at the tactical or strike level. *In other words, you have merged intelligence gathering, staff and command, and tactical application all into one organization.*

You may find the blend a little much. That, you say, is against the rules. Right you are! Go ahead and do it.

You've now, hopefully, slashed reaction time between perception and response. You've consolidated your domestic and foreign intelligence functions. You've got yourself a dagger as well as a cloak. You're virtually autonomous. You're free to develop and utilize a service readily adaptable to the multiple modes required for competing on the shock-warfare battlefields of the Third World.

Operational tips:

Your weakest point will probably be intelligence analysis. You'll find that you—and/or—your best officers—will score consistently in evaluating enemy intentions . . . and then miss a big and obvious maneuver. That's just the way it is. There is no safeguard. Committee review doesn't work. All you can do—I'm assuming you're by now basically qualified—is *totally immerse yourself* in your operational area and its situation. And *don't let up*. Take periodic breaks—but otherwise stop for nothing. Take no tangents. Absorb with every sense the information flowing to you.

You build your system, grab the gears, and don't let go for anything. If you do, your whole operation can turn to ashes overnight.

Avoid fixed patterns. Systems, yes, predictable patterns, no. Predictability would destroy one of your most important assets: your unknown and amateur status. You're not locked into standard operating procedure; take advantage of it. Be an unknown quantity, capricious as hell.

Use fear. Saturation internal security is predicated on fear. To a lesser extent fear is useful in foreign ops. And

good folk everywhere tend to remain honest if they imagine you're tapping their phones, reading their mail, subverting their servants, bugging their bedrooms, and are quite prepared to snatch them into eternity. I've had Haitians seriously tell me the pigeons in the town squares were actually Duvalier's spooks in drag. Old Papa Doc, with his voodoo Baron Samedi act, really knew his people.

Identify power. Power structures in these countries are never quite what they're supposed to be. To be effective you've got to identify precisely who or what are the prime movers in your operational area. Don't just say the army or the Communist party or the Church or CIA. *Zero in* and identify the key elements. Once you've established who's of interest, your surveillance problem is vastly simplified.

Trust nobody. Accept that everybody plays the game these days by the Miami Rule: You do it to your friend, ally, and colleague before he does it unto you. Example: My best friend and adviser, the general I've just cited, was for years a loyal officer in the service of a local strongman. So was I. Our boss was assassinated. Behind the local assassins was the CIA. And behind both, secretly masterminding the whole conspiracy but unknown to the CIA, was none other than the general. At the end all hands turned on one another. It was like the feeding frenzy of sharks.

You are equally vulnerable to betrayal in your foreign ops. But you can minimize the danger to a considerable extent. How? *You cut to the bare minimum the contact you have with your covert units and their contact with anybody in a position to betray them.*

Sounds like basic precautions, certainly, and only common sense, right? Right. Except that the big official agencies do not and cannot work that way. Policy dictates they *must* have not only contact but *control*. That's why things always get so messy in an Agency op—and that's also why, merc, there's a market for your kind of intelligence services.

And the key to your whole intelligence operation is identifying *who* to target.

Target Individuals—Not Institutions

Look at any Third World conflict situation and what do you see? At first glance it seems a swirling mass of confusion, raw hysteria, a chaotic jumble of fast-moving events. It isn't.

Look again . . . and again and again. You'll begin to see shadowy figures moving behind those events. You'll see *prime movers*—even if only in retrospect. You have to identify those people and target them. Put a name and face to your intelligence targets and you're in business.

Theoretically, of course, it would be splendid if you could penetrate a hostile regime and its institutions. And maybe you can. But don't count on it. Remember, too, that your primitive little service is no match for the counter-intelligence of any regime with sophisticated foreign sponsorship. Another thing: you will have extreme difficulty communicating that intelligence. Communications is your weakest point.

You'll have problems of a different nature if the target is some sort of revolutionary front. It's like trying to get a fix on a puff of swirling smoke. Everything is in motion.

Change is constant. Guerrilla and terrorist institutions multiply, divide, subtract, add, and disappear like a computer gone crazy. Not to worry. The key *human* figures will reappear—and you can target them. You give them names and faces and you can trace their movements.

That's true, too, of officially sponsored agents.

In the beginning you'll only know *where they have been*. That's because your real targets are, or should be, the people-who-make-things-happen. They are people who make waves. They are the cadres, the prime movers. You can backtrack them. And no matter how they guise themselves or try to conceal their movements, they leave a trail—a trail that will take you to contacts and situations that add up to real intelligence. Eventually you may even be able to anticipate them.

The prime movers are catalysts. They become known quantities. They set in motion chain reactions—and chain reactions are predictable. Watch those people and you'll know what's happening. And what's very likely going to happen.

So your job is to identify the nature of the threat, zero in on the direction from which it is coming, ignore its institutional form, and seek to identify and target the human beings who physically constitute that threat.

And then you worry like crazy that the real attack might just be coming from an unexpected direction in unknown form!

That possibility is ever present—as several of my late patrons could attest. But you can reduce the risk by always assuming there are not one but *two* hostile power structures out there. You have the obvious targets: the veteran

leaders and cadres who for years have controlled their respective organizations and institutions. The other is strictly clandestine. Its prime movers will initially lack names and faces. They're smarter and better trained than the old boys and their gangs. And they are usually foreign sponsored.

What you do is use the obvious targets as aiming stakes to target the other element lurking in the bushes behind the front men. They'll be there. They have to maintain close contact with your obvious opposition and with their own concealed command centers. The linkage will slowly become obvious.

If you spot it too late, you're dead. The only thing you can do is look, right from the beginning, for linkage between your obvious enemies and less obvious potential enemies. It's there, you can find it, and can then begin targeting the actual people involved. You start building a target list. It'll be short.

A brilliant intelligence officer, John Clements, used to say that the power elite of the United States numbered not more than 450 people. He had a mental file, as well as tapes and file folders, on each of them. In a different context, the power elite of your opposition in your Third World operational area—even your operational *region*—will probably number barely 200. Forget all the other chatter. Don't squander your limited intelligence assets on broad-front operations. Zero in on your target list, looking for linkage and expanding it name by name. Try to monitor those people relentlessly. After a while you'll be amazed at how predictable they are.

Now . . . what guidelines do you use in building your target list?

You look for people trying to put *systems* in place. They're in perpetual motion trying to build systems: political, clandestine, military, covert supply, intelligence. That requires a certain amount of exposure. But the real tip-off is when they begin to make *transfers*: money, arms, personnel, narcotics, communications. Those transfers are crucial—and dangerous.

Your prime target has a permanent problem. The bane of his existence is that he must eternally work with and through clumsy, loudmouthed amateurs. He tries to go by the book and work through an elaborate screen of proxies and cutouts. Doesn't work. At some point he has to come out of the closet and hunker down with the field hands. That exposes them both.

But it's those transfers that will put your target high on your list. Those items are the staples of war. When your man starts passing out goodies like that, it excites the troops. The result is that a transfer is often about as subtle and silent as a trunkful of bricks crashing down a stairwell. If you're properly tuned in, you'll hear it.

If your intelligence is well developed, you may be able to track your target to the transfer. If not, you at least should be able to backtrack the transfer to the target. Remember . . . for all his trade-craft and sophistication, your opposite number has to work in an environment in which complete secrecy is nonexistent. And, of course, the same holds true for you.

And you still have to worry about being zapped from an unexpected direction.

But at least you're in a position to know what you're worrying about. You're thinking for yourself. You are no longer at the mercy of someone else's blunders, meaning you have moved to SOF status. And as a soldier of fortune you might just be able to escalate to full-service independent operative. FSIO. That is your next objective.

So stand by for a radical shift in your lifestyle.

PART 5

**FSIO: Full-Service
Independent Operative**

Now . . . a test of your ability to confront sudden change and make swift adjustment. Because until now we have concentrated on matters grim and grisly, on survival and the savage skills, on people who want either to save the world or blow it up.

There is more to this way of life than mucking about in tropical bush and mud. In this same career context exists another dimension which few people attain and which many don't even know exists: the full-service independent operative. This status should be your final career objective.

For too many people in the mercenary business, risking is an end in itself. But their real end is seldom pleasant. For others, genuine patriotism and idealism are paramount. Power is another objective. And so, of course, is pursuit of fame and glory, a craving particularly hazardous to one's health. And greed, almost absent in the beginning, slowly becomes a major motivation for our aging mercs.

These motives are not mutually exclusive. They all converge in the role of the FSIO. This guy is mercenary in the true definition of the term; he looks out for number one. Causes and clients are for him strictly business—but the FSIO has a knack for combining business with pleasure.

He has laid aside his assault rifle and now ports smaller, more genteel weaponry. He no longer hangs out much with the old merc fraternity. He's discovered girls. Now his focus is more on money, fun, glamor, and publicity.

That's right, publicity. You can finally come out of the closet, Joe. No more of those silently terrifying landings at hostile airports. No more sneaking in the side doors of the wrong embassies. No more flitting around anonymously on the fringes of civilized society. No more small, tacky hotels. Now you go first class.

That was old Joe Stehlin's way. Always first class. For an intro view of this way of life, let's take a quick look at Stehlin and other FSIO prototypes.

Section 1:

Prototype Operators and Operations

A *New York Times* story of 5 November 1925 is a cogent slice of FSIO life. The headline and lead paragraph read:

BRINGS CROWN GEM OF MOROCCO RULERS

Young Soldier of Fortune
Arrives with the Famous
Sultana Diamond

STONE WEIGHS 183 CARATS

Joseph C. Stehlin, 28-year-old soldier of fortune, arrived in New York last night on the French liner *Paris*, bringing with him the famous Sultana Dia-

mond which for three hundred years has been the chief ornament of the crown of the Sultans of Morocco. . . .

How Stehlin had acquired the diamond was never quite clear. He said he was acting as intermediary for the Sultan and told of bizarre cloak-and-scimitar plots and counter-plots in the Sahara. What counted was that he had the million-dollar diamond and was soon to sell it. Which he did. And Joe Stehlin was suddenly rich, a retired SOF at the age of twenty-eight.

Stehlin had come out of nowhere—although reportedly nowhere was the French Foreign Legion—at the end of World War I and, in his early twenties, blazed a quick career in the rash of localized postwar conflicts that swept Eastern Europe. At one point, aged twenty-two, he commanded the tiny Estonian Air Force!

A year or two later, he turned up in Morocco—and was soon sailing across the Atlantic in grand style to broker the gem. And the publicity didn't hurt at all. He made a stack of big bills from the sale . . . and then displayed that masterly restraint so few of you guys have: He opened a classy Miami restaurant with the money and settled down comfortably to live the life of a society restaurateur, raconteur, and man-about-town. For years Joe Stehlin was a Miami fixture, beloved of local columnists and society hostesses.

But then it happened. . . . Again came the call of the wild—and Joe Stehlin, soldier of fortune, was again off to the wars. This time it was the big one, World War II. Last word about Joe Stehlin was that he allegedly took part in a

bank robbery in Manila in 1945. He then disappeared into the oblivion from which he had come. . . .

Years later, however, his former wife added a variation to the story. It seems that she met a "dashing American flyer, a lighthearted adventurer" named Captain Joseph Stehlin, at about the same time he was supposed to be in Manila. Her name was Flor de Oro, daughter of the savagely magnificent Generalissimo Rafael Léonidas Trujillo Molina of the Dominican Republic.

The Generalissimo was outraged when Flor invited Stehlin into her suite at the Hotel Carlyle in Manhattan. Even so, the pair married—Flor for the fifth time—and Stehlin proceeded to extract from Flor the heavy cash flow which Flor had managed to extract from Papa, which further infuriated the old dictator.

Stehlin decided it was time to bail out. He was last seen, according to Flor, heading for South America . . . where he may or may not have lived happily ever after.

He's long been a corpse, wherever Stehlin is. If not done in by Trujillo or Filipinos, somebody else would eventually have implemented the inevitable. The moral is not that Stehlin should have quit the game while he was ahead; people like him never stop. The real significance is that Stehlin soared from field mercenary status straight into the soldier of fortune category and on to wealthy independent operative status—and did it by the time he was twenty-eight. Stehlin then relaxed—if only for a few years—to enjoy the luxuries he'd earned. He took his risks; he reaped his reward.

The heavy money in this business is in focusing full time on activities that most SOFs do as sideline activities—act-

ing as brokers of the staples of power: money, secrets, contact with important people, guns, influence, gold, gems, sex, and, yes, narcotics. The FSIO is also a consultant, to use a broad and much abused term, a consultant to people seeking power, or trying to retain power, or escaping from collapsing power.

Like any other businessman, the FSIO provides needed goods and services. It is the nature of those goods and services and of the market he sells them to that makes him unique. He caters to two main types of clients and contacts: (1) the rich, famous, and powerful, and (2) the dwellers in the world's twilight zone, both political and criminal. Today, both groups are slowly melding into one. The FSIOs of this world are the marriage brokers.

FSIOs move back and forth between these two client categories. They are able to make things happen in both worlds. So there is no lack of clients. There will always be a market for people like Doña Flor's husbands.

Yes, husbands in plural. Fifth husband Stehlin was a smart operator—but Doña Flor's first husband was a master of the craft. I mean, of course, Porfirio Rubirosa.

A Master Operator

People in the trade like doing business in Belgium. That's why the little country is the logistics center for many of the world's little wars.

Arms buyers appreciate the Belgian government's relaxed attitude regarding arms deals. And the good old Fabrique Nationale has an excellent reputation for integrity; whether or not buyers are all that keen on FN's rather inferior assault rifles, integrity's a major factor for consum-

ers. And then there's FN's famed full-service treatment extended clients. The company will handle your initial logistics, even arranging ship chartering for you. FN will even help you with weapons bought from competitors.

Lastly, there's that eagerly cooperative Third World diplomatic corps stationed in Brussels. Every banana republic is well represented, and with good reason—the word has gone forth that a posting to Belgium is like finding money under the mattress. Reason: Exercising their diplomatic immunity and privilege, they can sell their signatures at the bottoms of sheets of paper called “end user's certificates”—which attest that little Bhutan or Togo is buying vast quantities of arms and is, in fact, the “end user” of this or that shipment.

With that piece of paper you're legal. So are your manufacturer, dealer, and shipper.

So it was rather odd the way an international arms dealer named Porfirio Rubirosa handled the purchase of \$30 million worth of FN/FALs. The sale was legal. He was an accredited diplomat of the buyer, the Dominican Republic, and could have handled the entire deal and signed the certificate himself.

Instead, Rubirosa put the deal through an American arms dealer in Europe. The dealer and FN handled the logistics. That cut bone deep into Rubirosa's authorized 12.5% commission. He ended up making about \$400,000 out of the deal.

That was Rubirosa, a mixture of caution and impatience. He was always leery about being too visibly linked to his deals—and he also had the attention span of a five-year-old. Let somebody else handle the details. Rubirosa

was off and wheeling-dealing another project before the guns even reached the Caribbean.

That was Rubirosa; emissary to the Kennedy compounds in Palm Beach and Hyannisport in search of political favors—and envoy to the court of Otto Skorzeny in Spain to seek mercenaries. The same Rubirosa who squired and screwed film stars and socialites was also the guy who was a business associate of the Mob and once flooded the Dominican Republic with Syndicate slot machines.

That was Rubirosa, member of the Club.

That was Rubirosa, pirouetting his way through the rich and famous and lethal and infamous with equal skill. He moved from one big deal and convoluted conspiracy to the next, always an instigator, a promoter, and always picking up his chips and gliding gracefully out of range before people started killing people.

But Porfirio Rubirosa was no coward. He knew he was playing a dangerous game with dangerous people and played his hand accordingly. Time and again he shafted the later-assassinated Dominican dictator, Generalissimo Trujillo. Each time, he would stay out of range for a few months—then return and repeat the performance. And he got away with it. Anybody else would have been killed. Rubirosa never moved beyond parameters visible only to him—and the Generalissimo.

I couldn't help admiring Rubirosa. I certainly envied him. He raced through life. He was always in motion, whether aboard fast cars—which finally killed him—planes, yachts, horses, or women. His image, of course, was that of a stud who made a career of seducing young, beautiful females and servicing old, wealthy women. The

image was valid. But even the women couldn't supply money fast enough. Rubi's polo ponies, Ferraris, and other hobbies constantly drained his cash flow. Rubirosa was the kind of guy who could score big one month and be broke the next. And the prospect of poverty horrified him.

Thus his ever-deepening involvement in the secret world. He had become addicted. Rubirosa almost certainly would have gotten himself terminated had not his Ferrari totaled him first in a 1965 crash in Paris. It is true there are whispers that he was "accidental," that his car was rigged to crash. But the fact is that Rubirosa habitually drove at high speeds while under the influence; either way, it was only a question of time.

Stehlin and Rubirosa. They never met, possibly never even knew of each other. Their backgrounds and specialties were entirely different. Yet, their styles were similar. In each case their personal style seemed part calculated, part instinctive. Rubirosa, at least, could no more have spelled out his tactical style than he could have changed from being the human shark he was.

One operator who has made a conscious study of FSIO tactical style is Roger Gibson, Miami's premier private investigator. Gibson, cited previously in chapter on security agencies, is a member of the Club. His full-service operation tends to range from Hong Kong to Rio de Janeiro; his clientele from Miami's millionaire elite to destitute blacks to some of Colombia's wealthy.

Roger Gibson has developed chameleon tactics to a working formula. You'll note that *much of what he advises is directly applicable to mercenary SOFs at every level*. The difference is that his technique has been carefully devel-

oped and refined over the years—and that it's aimed at a target audience vastly more sophisticated than Third World guerrillas. As with all FSIOs, his chameleon skills are essential to his success.

Tactics and Style

"I'm an actor," says Gibson. He's a very tough, sophisticated operative sleekly adapted to a very tough, sophisticated town.

"And I'm a damn good actor. I have to be. I shift roles constantly. When I come on as, say, an insurance adjuster, I *become* an insurance adjuster. Or maybe the scene requires thug tactics. I shift style and tactics."

Other points Gibson raises regarding confrontation tactics:

Deception and guile plus speed and power. That adds up to shock—but it has to be carefully orchestrated. I preplan every encounter. I lay out the encounter my way. It's my show. That's a huge advantage. Take bounty hunting: I grab my guy and move him out so fast he's in shock—and the action also has to be fast because the scene can change just as fast.

Whatever the nature of the confrontation, you've got to show professionalism. You're in command. So you act with precision. You watch your timing. Above all, you display total confidence. And if you have to reinforce that image, don't hesitate to stick a gun in his face.

You always search for the right mix of mind and muscle in getting what you want. That means you've got to constantly evaluate your targets. Those people . . . who are

they? How can I best deal with them? You shift modes accordingly.

You know what I find works—works with everybody: witnesses, suspects, the good guys and the bad, the smoothies as well as the hard ones? *Flattery*, that's what. I stroke them. I'll say to a suspect: "Very professional job you did, the most flawless scam I've ever seen go down. Friend, you're an artist!" And you know what? More often than not, he—or she—will brighten up, grin, then tell me the whole story!

The above tactical style characterizes virtually all our world-class operatives. They have off-the-shelf personalities with flip-on, flip-off controls. They are manipulators, as are all competent secret service officers and super-salesmen. But in all their chameleon modes, two powerful traits are invariably up front:

1. Stupendous self-confidence.
2. Blazing intensity.

That's been true of such diverse characters as that strange little hunchbacked SOF superstar, Homer Lea, who would come out with such statements as "It is my destiny to free China of the Old Buddha," meaning the Empress of China.

A more contemporary successful example is Bob Denard, the famed French mercenary leader. Denard lacked any real military experience when he launched his career as a merc leader in Africa back in 1960. His flamboyance and total self-assurance turned him into a superstar.

But take care that your projected image doesn't turn into pure show biz and end in disaster. An American guer-

rilla in Cuba, Major William Morgan, came to believe his own myth and ended up before a firing wall. Mike Echanis made himself the most famous contemporary American mercenary. Crazy for publicity and acclaim, he even indulged in such circus stunts as having himself run over by a jeep to prove his toughness. Echanis was enormously impressive—but his boastful chatter got him killed.

What it comes down to, Joe, is that there's an invisible line out there between flamboyant self-confidence and show biz self-imagery. Cross that line and you're dead. Don't lose touch with reality. And that reality is—fame and fortune notwithstanding—you're now in as much danger as you were back in your lowly field merc days.

Now more than ever, you're involved with fundamentals both primitive and violent: life and death, greed and money, pain and exaltation, victory and defeat; power, fear, hate, sex.

Any one of those things can get you killed. Add to those the constant unseen presence of *betrayal*—a specter that will hang over you throughout your career like a waiting-to-happen avalanche.

Never underestimate the violence potential of people caught up in these human fire storms. Every move you make, every word you speak, must literally be calculated. Never forget your earlier underground operational mode of economy in words and motion and minimal exposure to hazardous environment. You are still in Condition Red. Your personal style, however seemingly flamboyant, must be modified to that reality.

What I can't impress on you enough is the importance of constant alertness to the threat of betrayal by those you

believe are on your side. It's a constant. Right from the beginning you're still considered expendable—and potentially dangerous to your patron. You may have graduated to FSIO status but the following sums up the probable attitude of your patrons and his peers. . . .

Mercenaries are both useless and dangerous; and if anyone attempts to found his state upon them, it will never be stable or secure; for they are disunited, disloyal, and braggarts among friends; but among enemies they are cowards and they have neither fear of God nor good faith with men; so that the ruin of the Prince who depends on them will be deferred only just so long as the attack is deferred.

The fellow who wrote that was an Italian dude named Machiavelli, an FSIO in sixteenth-century Italy. Machiavelli knew whereof he spoke. Certainly, his criticism is as valid today as it was when he wrote *The Prince* in 1513. You'll meet people in this business who are right out of old Machiavelli. Incidentally, you'd do well to read his book.

But don't tell anyone you're into heavy reading. It doesn't fit your image. Your style should be that you don't take yourself too seriously—but you do get all concerned and intense about your patron's problems. Otherwise, relax. . . . And don't overwork the terms *soldier of fortune* or *mercenary*. Walk warily if a guy tells you he's a "merc." We use the terms here freely by necessity and because presumably it's all in the family. But people in the trade get a little squirmy when they see the type of turkeys who do announce themselves as such.

Keep your sense of humor. Be cool, natural. No postur-

ing. . . . No heavy breathing. No serious use of terms like *freedom fighter*. A little self-mockery helps a lot. A wry, cynical attitude will develop by itself as you go along. The truly intense people and fanatics die young.

Of course, you rarely find true fanatics among real soldiers of fortune—and none among the FSIOs. That's one distinction between these two categories. Another is that while FSIOs are soldiers of fortune, SOFs are not necessarily FSIOs; the difference being that the SOF is primarily motivated by adventure, the FSIO by money. The FSIO is probably the only genuine mercenary in the business. And he's smarter than the rest of us.

That's very true: the FSIOs see opportunities everywhere. A friend of mine was working the wars in Central America when he read of a sudden rise in Stateside beef prices. The general he was working with owned a huge herd of cattle. He bought a big consignment of beef from the general at discount prices, shipped it to the States, earned thousands of dollars in profit, then went back to his war.

In another case, two operatives—one working for the king of Morocco, the other free-lancing—earned more than a million dollars by arranging a barter of Moroccan phosphate for Caribbean sugar. The pair knew little of international business—but they were smart enough to line up people who did.

Generally, however, FSIOs prefer to deal in goods and services more interesting and profitable than beef and sugar. If there's a clandestine involvement, there's more fun and profit in the operation. Also, few people really

know their way around the underworld marketplace. FSIOs do—or think they do.

In point of fact, however, clandestine procurement is usually a business both dangerous and chaotic. The commodities you deal in are the least of your worries. It's the people in the business who'll drive you crazy.

FSIO Personnel Problems

Your FSIO role is heavy on secret logistics. You not only provide rare goods and services—field mercs, intelligence, contacts, escape routes and survival services, weapons and equipment, influence, banking services, sex—but you'll also be expected to knit the pieces together into operations and systems.

That means organizing and manipulating your own contract personnel. It ain't easy. The most basic problem, of course, is the people with whom you must deal. Here's an example.

Scene: many years ago in Miami. A whispered conference with trusted associate about forthcoming operation. I tell associate to start lining up men, guns, and ship. He asks: "Who's putting up the money? Who are the principals?"

False answer given: "It's Canadian Syndicate money out of Toronto, but tied in with the Cotroni interests in Montreal."

A week later, I was scooped up by the RCMP in Ottawa, Canada's capital and base of the operation. The burly Mountie inspector at Hamilton Street headquarters studied me, then read from a report. . . .

"Seems you're being financed by Canadian Syndicate

money out of Toronto, but tied in with the Cotroni interests in Montreal. . . ." End of operation.

There are several morals there. One is that you can have friends and associates—but never indulge the dangerous luxury of *trusting* friends and associates. Another is that your logistics can be blown even if, strictly speaking, they're quite legal. A third point is that you can't conduct serious business in an echo chamber like Miami—and that you really should keep it all offshore from the entire English-speaking community of nations. As you see, intelligence liaison between their respective services is so fast and accurate it doesn't even protect their informants.

I'll go even further. I suggest to you that Americans are fatally flawed when it comes to organizing clandestine—or even semiclandestine—operations. Same goes for the Brits. Maybe it's a cultural flaw, the product of free and open societies. Maybe it should be counted a virtue. In any event, stand by for chaos when you try to put together your logistics program.

If it's any consolation, official operators are no better. All you have to do is watch the resupply of "our" guerrillas in Central America, Africa, wherever. Our gang perform like a pack of drunken monkeys. One reason is there's a desperate shortage of really qualified people.

Take weapons. You'll go through your career besieged at every turn by arms *dealers*, both legal and illegal. But how about real *gunrunners*: the guys who actually move the merchandise onto dangerous turf?

You'll never find a good gunrunner around when you need one. Be warned that you'll find plenty of people willing to take your money in advance—and *then* move your

guns. You'll find lots of variations of that scam. But you'll always have trouble with the nuts-and-bolts people you need to service your op. Each time something comes up—unless you have planned and prepared well in advance—you have to push the panic button and start all over again.

My venerable colleague, "Walt," admits that even operators blessed by the powers-that-are have "great difficulty getting their act together. . . . Most likely, it's a rushed, screwed-up operation with whatever could be put together—experienced men who wonder what the hell they came for, first-timers looking for experience, weapons that shoot sometimes and ammo that doesn't shoot at all. . . .

Think you can do much better? Very possibly. The current state of military and paramilitary operational planning and organization ranges from juvenile to maniacal. And that goes for government contract people as well as independents—in fact, *particularly* for the contractees and their civil service masters.

Unfortunately, you're going to have to survive that perilous passage across the vast wasteland of current leadership before you can aspire to the higher calling of consultant on clandestine ops. Watch your peers and patrons. You'll note that the most successful are those most skilled at manipulating the others.

A constant at all levels of this way of life is the question of who is manipulating whom. I've seen even False Flags operations turned around on their operators. And you, FSIO status or no, are still subject to manipulation. You're still mercenary. The trick is not to avoid manipulation. It is to prevent control. There are certain precautions you may take. Call them your personal rules of engagement. If

you accept them, you'll minimize—but by no means eliminate—the risk factor inherent in this sort of thing.

Your FSIO Rules of Engagement

No narcotics. This is not merely a moral stand. This rule is for survival. You don't know the rules of that game—and those who do, and enforce them, bend them at their leisure. And it's lethal. Only the protected prime movers have any semblance of security. Your survival is at the whim of your masters.

Remember, too, that your big protection as an SOF-FSIO has been to keep your more legally questionable ops offshore. This won't protect you with narcotics. You can be extradited from wherever you operate—unless you prefer to disappear permanently into Castro's Cuba or the green hills of the Golden Triangle. So you stay away from dope!

Feel free to borrow from the Gibson Tactical Style in your contacts. It's clean, simple, and effective.

Observe the Miami Rules. You must assume that your associates will sooner or later seek to plant a Machiavellian dagger in your back. That's rule one. Rule two is hit them with a preemptive strike before they can initiate that operation.

Keep right on top of your profession constantly. Be alert to new contacts, ideas, opportunities. Be personally organized. And organize your own personal network of informants, your "moussebelline," to help you collect professional intelligence. At the same time, you've got to be tuned in with the old-boy network of other professional operatives. To develop both will take time and experience.

Demand top dollar. You're no longer entry level. You're

out of the nickel-and-dime circuit . . . a fact many mercs moving into soldier of fortune and independent operative status often fail to grasp. They're still grateful just to be allowed to play the Game. And don't be backward in your demands. You're going to be dealing with rich and powerful people. They are not impressed by modesty and thrift. Larceny worries them far less than the possibility of your stiletto in their back.

Go into your precombat mode when you deal with or in the underworld. And you will have such dealings. That's because your patrons and peers do. You'll be startled at first to realize that the world's movers and shakers are merrily mixed up with the world's gangsters and killers. You'll get used to it—but don't get too blasé. The VIP types can protect themselves; you're vulnerable. For you, the underworld is a hazardous environment. You know that drill. Get in, do your thing, get out.

Have your fail-safes in place. Just as in the old days you're facing possible explosive violence or potential disaster. Stay mobile, prepared to shift your act to other shores, other patrons.

Don't get on a collision course with the Club—that strange and vast conglomerate of individuals and interests directly or obliquely affiliated with the CIA. You'll find that every step of your career you'll be mixing with Club members. Collaborate freely with them, but don't go all the way in or take their money unless you're also willing to accept Club rules.

In any event, you and the Club people are going to be neighbors. You and they will find yourselves sharing the same cities.

SOF Cities

Here, in no particular order, are the towns in which you can expect to ply your trade. Listings are not intended to be definitive; the world changes too fast. What they have in common is that they're all dangerous. You'll note another characteristic: These cities are also concentrations of money and/or power—and international crime. This is no coincidence. Usually, too, you'll find the official spooks, both East and West, busily at work on this same turf. And you often can't tell them apart—or separate them from honest criminals.

Two cases in point. One is *Istanbul*—a classic of this type. It's also one of the world's most fascinating cities in its own right. And one of the most violent. This ancient crossroads between Europe and the Middle East is to this part of the world what Miami is to the Americas. All the staples are here.

The action is both split and convergent between and with: (1) local and international terrorist groups, (2) the so-called Turkish Mafia, dealing in narcotics, guns, and hired guns, and (3) secret agents of both East and West working with and against each other through the people in categories (1) and (2).

This city is strictly for postgrad mercs, obviously. If the cannibals in the foregoing categories don't dump you in the Golden Horn, you stand a good chance of running afoul of Istanbul's overeager cops—and having seen Turkish police in action and the inside of Turkish jails, I can report that Mexico's infamous counterparts are mild by comparison.

Now . . . shift four thousand miles to a sleazy little

port city in Central America: *Belize*, the only real town in this former British colony. A far cry from Istanbul's grandeur, this tacky tropical town is nevertheless a minor version of the Turkish model. Dopers and gunrunners abound. So do foreign agents of various persuasions. Seedy mercs drift in and out. Guns go west to Marxist guerrillas in Guatemala. Narcotics go north to the States. And official corruption is institutionalized.

But Belize is still Little League. There are very tough people here—but, as yet, you're not likely to end up at the bottom of the Belize River. You might give it a shot. You'll find a couple local bars where the dopers and self-styled soldiers of fortune hang out. Just don't forget that even dabbling in narcotics is particularly lethal to people in your trade.

Half a world away is another study in contrasts: *Hong Kong*, perhaps Asia's prime SOF city. It has all the previously mentioned ingredients—except that guns are no-nos for all hands—plus an added ingredient. . . .

Hong Kong is prime vulture country.

Hong Kong means money. Really heavy money. Hong Kong island has more millionaires per square block than Manhattan. And it's frightened money. The city is quietly terrified. It's a subdued fear that inevitably is going to percolate into explosive panic as time passes—because time is in the process of destroying the colony.

The British lease expires in 1997. The human and capital flight has already begun. H.K.'s five million running dogs of capitalism see no local future other than total tyranny, economic collapse, serfdom, and, quite literally, death. The huge black hammer is starting its descent.

The scramble for the exits is already on. Passport rings are now in business with prices starting at twelve thousand dollars. Wealthy families are besieging the local U.S. consulate for student visas for their children; failing that, as most do, they have been known to pay as high as twenty thousand dollars for their child's marriage to a U.S. citizen, thereby guaranteeing entry.

It's there, compadre, frightened money in motion. If you think you're among the operative elite, hit the road to Hong Kong. Here's a thought to take with you.

Hong Kong's great business houses are planning to scatter to Taiwan, the Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia . . . wherever. Jardine Matheson, the colony's biggest and oldest hong, is already moving to Bermuda.

But the scattered, exiled companies will wither away, powerful H.K. business leaders fear. It was a unique composite of factors, say the taipans, that made the colony such a dynamic center of world commerce. And there'll never be another Hong Kong.

Not necessarily true—that's the message a syndicate of world-class operatives has been whispering to the taipans. Would you like to take over some thinly populated little country as a site for a new Hong Kong? They claim to have scouted out several prospects. Properly financed, taking one of them would be a piece of cake.

Will it come to anything? Who knows? Opium for the pipes of China led to the founding of Hong Kong. It'll probably end in another pipe dream.

London is at least on a par with New York City as a world financial center—meaning there is always a market here for mercenaries. But it may not be quite what you

think. Forget the movies: the British somehow manage to make this business rather dull.

The old-boy network is a particularly powerful force in Britain. It's virtually an arm of the government. Security agencies employing mercenaries draw their people almost entirely from the elite units like SAS and Royal Marines. They have more freedom than their American Agency-connected counterparts, but at the same time are much more sensitive to official disapproval. The official leash is longer on British mercs—but the slightest sign of government anger is enough for them to cancel lucrative contracts and adhere docilely to Whitehall policy. Mavericks of America's Ed Wilson type are rare.

Britain is just barely in the market for American operators. British intelligence, in its several forms, does retain Americans in operations for which British agents would not be appropriate. I can report they pay well. Generally, however, you've got to have excellent transatlantic connections to operate with the British—and you'll still be very much an outsider.

You'll also have that problem in *Johannesburg*, South Africa. And you'll have plenty of others. You can pretty well forget straight mercenary work. Even Major Mike Hoare's famed Wild Geese are now lame ducks. But if you're prepared to supply any of the multiple goods and services required by a society fighting for its survival, then Jo'burg is for you. However, you'll find the locals extremely difficult people with whom to do business. They're very parochial and paranoid. On the international level about all that can be said for this city is that it's headquar-

ters for Leka I. King of the Albanians—and he usually has something interesting going down.

You can forget most of Europe. The Swiss cities *Bern* and *Zurich* used to be considered hotbeds of intrigue. Whatever they were in the old days, they're dullsville now. Most of the cloak-and-dagger tradesmen have gone elsewhere.

But *Rome* is something else. The backwash from the Middle East has poured into the city—particularly from Libya—with all the tortuous complexities that implies. *Paris* is headquarters for literally scores of exile and transnational activist groups—not to mention criminal networks. However, be aware of a fine distinction: These groups are Paris based but their operational function is generally from a third country—Belgium, say, or Spain. Despite the occasional outbreaks of terror that hit Paris, most foreign groups are scared of the very tough French secret police—and so should you be. But you can make excellent contacts in Paris.

Athens is worthy of note only in that you may be hired to target that city's flourishing terrorist support-base activities. Greece is hostile country. Same for Malta—although the little island's capital, *Valletta*, is worthy of reconnaissance. It's becoming the Belize of the Mediterranean.

In contrast to the dwindling action in European cities, let's go back to East Asia—to Thailand and *Bangkok*. Here you'll find action. . . .

Nowhere else in Asia will you find anything quite like Thailand. There are rubies out in them thar hills—and sapphires and jade. And plenty of opium and border warlords and guerrillas and assorted gangsters. Official and

semiofficial spooks still abound. And in Bangkok itself are a thousand American ex-servicemen left over from Vietnam. There are even a few weird Frenchmen who've been in Bangkok since *their* IndoChina war. The city has also attracted dozens of other nationalities—many of them seemingly either out of Kipling or John Le Carré.

But if you're smart, Joe, you'll skip the conspiracy circuit, just this once, and concentrate on all those precious stones. The rubies and sapphires—and that fine jade—come in from neighboring Burma to Thai border towns like Bo Rae and Mae Sai. Burma's various private armies swap them there for consumer goods and guns—at a fraction of the gems' real worth.

You have your choice if you're dealing in gems and jade. You can either play it safe and wait for the goodies to filter down to Bangkok from the border—at inflated prices—or go to the border and do your own buying. The second way you make more money, see the country, have lots of fun—and run the real risk of disappearing permanently into those lovely green hills. What did you expect? Goodies like gems and bad guys are always packaged together.

You'll find much the same situation in *Panama City*—minus the gems and scenery. However, the sheer numbers of the bad guys here may make up for the deficit. Panama City is a traffic center for dopers, guerrillas, terrorists, international criminals, crooked bankers, spies—you name it.

The commodities they deal in are the usual: guns, coke, money, information, clandestine ops. You pay off the right officers in the Defense Forces and you're automatically ad-

mitted to this inter-American Mafia. It entitles you to do everything but sleep with the president's wife.

Curaçao, Netherlands Antilles, is more genteel. Like Panama it's a center for smuggling and laundering hot money—but the bad guys here wear ties, sometimes, and sit behind desks. Dummy corporations here handle the finances of guerrilla gangsters throughout the region and beyond—and billions of narco-dollars are cleansed here and go right back to the U.S. in the form of legitimate investment. Neighboring *Aruba* is *not* genteel. Very tough place, dominated by the international dope cartel. Be careful.

Stateside action is limited to not more than three or four cities. *Honolulu* is one—if you like your action almost entirely Company controlled. A talent pool of contract people here is tapped for Agency account work all over the Far East-Pacific area.

To the east is a vast wasteland—except for occasional action in *San Francisco*—until you hit the Atlantic. *New York City* is what you might expect: international security agencies, whole battalions of foreign diplomats, hordes of exiles, frightened bankers and businessmen, lots of money. . . .

One thing about New York, it's one of two North American cities—the other is Miami—where the world's wars constantly spill over into the city itself. A jungle guerrilla war or Eastern European intrigue can get you killed just as dead in midtown Manhattan as on location. New Yorkers seldom realize what's really going down in their own town—and couldn't care less.

Washington? Actually, the suburbs are more interesting—but I'll give you no guidance.

Now, *Miami*. . . . It may not be much but it's homey. Outsiders are also charmed by the Miami scene. Read this glowing account by Penny Lernoux in her recent book *In Banks We Trust*:

Like Casablanca and Saigon, Miami, for geopolitical reasons, has become a meeting place for intelligence operatives, drug traffickers, terrorists, mobsters—and bankers, who have flocked to southern Florida because of the deluge of “hot” money. In the atmosphere of violence, espionage, and quick bucks, adventurers . . . thrive. . . . Miami has attracted schemers of one sort or another almost since its founding. Long before the narcotics boom made it the drug capital of the United States, southern Florida was a rendezvous for Caribbean pirates and slave traders. In the early days much of the city's income came from looting vessels wrecked along the treacherous coast; and during Prohibition . . . bootlegger fines were carried as a substantial asset in the city's budget. Visitors to the Florida Keys can still buy a drink at the ramshackle bar where Humphrey Bogart fought Edward G. Robinson in *Key Largo*. A similar celluloid atmosphere pervades the hotels along the “Gold Coast” of Miami Beach; half the properties are owned by notorious mobsters.

Penny, the Miami Chamber of Commerce couldn't have put it better—which means that if you make the soldier of fortune scene here you should heed the city's former tourism slogan: Miami—see it like a native. You'll then come

dressed appropriately in *Miami Vice* pastels over an armored vest and porting a KG-9.

Now let's hear it for the most beautiful SOF city in the world: *Rio de Janeiro*. Now, it's true that Brazil is not yet on anybody's short-term hit list. This somewhat limits business opportunities. However, the scenery is so spectacular—the city, the sea and sky, the girls—that it's worth a little recon to stir up some action—and you'd better get down to Rio before your fellow tribesmen manage to screw up the scene. It can't last.

Until then, Rio probably won't improve your cash flow picture. For that, you turn to your traditional customers and markets: frightened people in an increasingly dangerous environment.

Section 2:

Winning with Losers and Lost Causes

Most people are leery of losers. Not you, Joe. People in your business are just naturally drawn to lost causes. And losers are some of your best customers.

Consumers of your services range from being worried to being terrified. They have good reason. Their world is collapsing piecemeal. One by one, traditional sociopolitical systems around the globe have been doing their domino act since World War II. And the end is not in sight.

We've reviewed your potential role in the secondary stages of such an insurgency. Let's assume now that it's gone into its final phase. Your role will change accordingly.

Before, during, and after the final crash you will shift from a purely military mode to a much broader and more complex capacity. Intelligence and logistics will be paramount—not your mercenary skills. Now more than ever, money becomes a key factor, not only for you but for your clients. Political considerations will also weigh particularly heavily at this time; you have to carefully watch and evaluate the outside world's reaction to your losers and their lost cause. You must, in short, really be able to offer that full service we've talked about.

What makes the whole thing less complex is that it tends to follow a pattern. You learn what to expect.

Lost Causes, Ltd.

"We are caught in a trap, members of a doomed civilization, dancers on a darkening stage across which the shadow of the Neanderthal is settling."

That very eloquent line is by the late Arthur Koestler, a brilliant former "Neanderthal" intellectual who knew about doomed civilizations. He was an ex-Communist. Koestler had turned against the Party even though his mind told him he was "opting against the tide of history which logic indicates."

I tend to agree with Koestler's evaluation of the tide of history. That doesn't matter. What is important to you is that plenty of other people see the shadow falling on their own little darkening stage. You find fear everywhere in today's world. And fear, compadre, is what makes the mercenary world go around.

I've just come back from Paraguay—you should know where that is; this ain't a geography lesson—on assign-

ment. I think it would have appealed to Koestler. Paraguay is another darkening stage with a full cast of "dancers" and "shadows."

Paraguay has all the ingredients Koestler would have pronounced terminal. My appraisal was that Paraguay is clearly doomed to violent upheaval—but not immediately.

The time frame for Paraguay is difficult to predict. One key factor is missing: leadership. There are plenty of flaming revolutionaries around—but none with the *cojones* and charisma to detonate the blast that will bring down the big black hammer.

Or it could work in reverse. Recurrent waves of violence will produce that missing leader. It may be, too, that there'll be a whole series of detonations before the real upheaval—tremors before the big quake—and they won't even be recognized as such. That's the way it was in El Salvador. People there didn't know what was happening . . . until it happened.

Neither did American intelligence. It's traditional, this official inability to differentiate between routine political tremors and the advent of a vast upheaval. *Yet, if you know what to look for, you can always spot the advance signals.* The locals can't—but they feel it. It's eerie, looking at a target society and knowing they're a lost cause even before the shooting really starts.

You give your clients an honest evaluation. You tell them to bail out. They'll probably refuse. They're monied people and are prospering, looming disaster or no. Return on their capital in these countries is vastly more than it would be in Europe or America.

So they'll stay, they tell you. Their enterprises require

on-the-spot supervision. They'll try to hang on until the last.

You've warned them. That's their decision—and it means money for you, Joe Merc. Now they're in the market for other services and goodies you can supply. First off—and I've never seen it to fail—they'll want an electronic security blanket.

So go ahead—sell them that junk. Lots of so-called SOFs make fortunes selling sensory devices alone. You can also peddle items like armored vehicles, flak jackets and Kevlar clothing, guard dogs, defensive driving courses, even polygraphs to use on their servants and employees.

But be under no illusions. You're not a merc or SOF. You're an entrepreneur making a fast, safe, and easy buck. What you're selling has nothing whatsoever to do with your client's best interests. *This gimmick phase has nothing to do with his survival. In fact, the gimmickry deludes him into thinking he's actually doing something constructive to protect himself.* As a pro, you know better—and you tell him so. But he'll buy it anyway, so you might as well be the one catering to his delusion. You'll make a bundle.

(Be aware, however, of this reality: To succeed in the security technology business overseas, you have to be at least an honorary member of the Club.)

You'll make money on services too. Your clients won't understand the electronic gadgetry; they'll have to hire technicians to service the devices. You probably don't know anything about electronic security either. Not to worry and don't bother learning. You just hire somebody; that—where to tap specialists—you should know.

But they'll also want a service more directly in your

domain: intelligence. They're smart enough to know that a onetime intelligence evaluation needs constant updating. Even though you're a stranger, a foreigner, they'll want you to run their hometown early-warning system. That can be arranged—but it'll cost them plenty. See the intelligence section for more details. (And you may or may not be a Club member.)

Now . . . if the foregoing sounds too quick and easy—it is. *Dealing with your "dancers on a darkening stage" is a hassle every step of the way.* Your clients seldom make decisions on their own. They confer constantly. Friends, relatives, business associates, political allies—everybody gets in on the act. As time passes and things worsen, your client and his assorted associates frantically try to work together. They try to get themselves organized.

But they can't. Not really. They go through the motions, that's all. *None of them trusts any of the others.* Always keep that in mind—and they don't trust *you* either, good buddy!

What it comes down to is this: They will want you to lay out a secret plan to emergency-evacuate them, their families, and their mobile assets to safety in another country—meaning, in the end, the States.

The exact timing of this evac is crucial. If the looming emergency actually materializes, it could well be an overnight transformation. You and they can then no longer pick and choose the timing; the thing becomes a flight for life. Your patrons will understand this—theoretically. They definitely want to leave, say they, before that huge black hammer comes down. But still they can't agree on

timing. Or anything else. They'll be hassling each other and you right up to the end.

So your emergency-evacuation could easily become an extraction—meaning evacuation from a hostile area. Let's assume that the big hammer has finally hit.

Now we're in the extraction business—and it's getting hairier and hairier. I hope you're upping your fee accordingly.

Extractions, Inc.

The economics of losing a war or revolution are complex. They're also fascinating. When the hammer descends on a major city, money in many forms comes forth from its hiding places and tries to flee. Wealth comes out from under mattresses and bank vaults, from ladies' jewel boxes, and from the walls of art collections. The goodies and their owners run around in terror.

Your job is to extract (1) the owners and (2) large chunks of their wealth. The two objectives may not be compatible—but that duality certainly makes extractions more interesting.

Human behavior at such times follows a curious pattern. Stark terror is mixed with a strange euphoria. There is an almost tangible feeling of relief by combatants on both sides. People get drunk. They shoot their weapons and old enemies. They screw women, loot shops, run in shouting, screaming circles. Seemingly loyal servants of the old regime come forth to proclaim they were actually colonels in the victorious liberation army.

Crowds that yesterday cheered the old regime are today lynching cops and hunting down collaborators. They have

quickly learned the technique of what is called "getting inside the terror"—meaning it's better to be in the mobs chasing victims than it is to be the victims being chased.

This, compadre, is one of the scariest experiences you'll ever go through—but the fact is . . . the situation isn't as bad as it looks. Keep cool, stay professional; you'll get through it. *And now is the time to get your people out.* Now while everything is chaotic—because you, if not your clients, have had enough foresight to put in place an organized escape-and-evasion system, however rudimentary.

The real danger here is that you are *underfunded*. That's typical of most such operations. Let us hope that you knew well in advance the approximate cost of an extraction—and were able to extract the necessary money from the extractees. It's more expensive than you probably think.

The barest basics include transporting them to a safe house where they will stay until a rescue plane is ready for takeoff from a reasonably safe airstrip, transporting them to the aircraft, getting them aboard, and flying them to safety.

Sound simple? It ain't.

First off, where did you get that airplane? Chances are it wasn't just sitting there waiting for you. Manned aircraft are big-ticket items and you seldom know well in advance the exact timing of your extraction. Do you tie up a working aircraft and high-priced pilots for an indefinite length of time while awaiting final go-ahead? The cost could be astronomical. Remember, you'll need a sizable plane: your clients will probably want to lift out whole tribes of relatives, friends, servants, and so on.

That aircraft and flight crew won't do you any good if

they're sitting in Dakar or Honolulu when needed. Your pilots should already have been well briefed on their mission. They should be ready with a flight plan. Even a previous dry run should not be considered a luxury; you may have to take off from a field designed only for crop dusters.

Your job is to get all this settled in advance—and you do it *your* way, not your client's. That's what you're paid for. Don't let your clients fool around—and they will. Apart from operational logistics, you'll have problems in three areas: (1) your fee; they'll argue it right down to the wire, (2) maintaining routine security control over your babbling flock, and (3) determining who is and who is not to be extracted.

However, if (1) you're adequately funded, (2) your plan has been put in place, and (3) you've kept tight operational control, an *early* extraction isn't as dangerous as it seems.

It may come off so easily you'll be tempted to go back for seconds and thirds. Up to you—but the risk soars with each passing day. The new order is consolidating its grip. Soon it'll crackdown on these escape systems. It may even take them over, turn them into traps and False Flags operations for its own purposes.

But you, Joe Merc, will have backed off long before.

The Exile Industry

Okay. We have now evacuated or extracted our unfortunate patrons from their unhappy homeland. We have either been generously rewarded for our magnificent courage—or else helped ourselves liberally to their portable assets.

We even managed to salvage that priceless collection of Impressionists, even though it meant having to bump

Grandma and a couple cousins off the flight at the last minute. The client didn't object. Obviously, he's a man with whom you can do more business.

And both parties agree on the nature of that business. We're back in the exile industry again. Long live the Counterrevolution.

That's right. Those people you just extracted—the minute they step off the plane they and thousands of other new exiles are going to start plotting their return. And now they are once again in the market for mercenary services.

Exiles are a key component in the business of being a mercenary. Handle them with great care. They can make you rich. They can also get you killed.

Dealing with exiles requires a deft touch in human relations. Initially, they're confused, angry, often illogical. With some exiles this mental tilt becomes so pronounced as time passes that they literally tap out on reality. That can be dangerous. It can also get plain boring.

You're dealing with people who'll stare you straight in the eye and tell you how the folks back home are quietly lusting for their return. What we need is your help, Joe Merc, patriot and philanthropist. One little strike will do it. One little armed action and the whole rotten structure collapses.

And then, my friend, say they, we shall restore freedom and justice to our poor country. And we shall send you home laden with riches. Or maybe you'd like the gambling concession. . . . No? You say you already have three gambling concessions? Well, what would you say to the capital's most elegant whorehouse?

Meanwhile, goes the patter, and we're quoting here vir-

tually verbatim from such conferences over the years, we're sure you understand why we can't pay you real money *just yet*. Those unspeakable bastards back home have confiscated everything. However, I know how to get money, big money. I've in mind a little low-risk show of force that will bring in a flood of money. . . .

Translated, he means he wants you to risk your precious butt *on spec*. That, compadre, is an ironclad professional no-no. *Never!* And at this point any sane normal individual—let alone a merc—will sneer politely and run the other way.

(But not us. We sit spellbound. We've heard it all before and it still fascinates us. You see, there's an element of truth to everything our exile has just said—but just an element. Anyway, hear the guy out, we tell ourselves. . . .

And that is how we have acquired estates in the Balkans, at least three Latin American casinos, and similar goodies. Of course, we haven't quite been able to secure clear title; however, our patrons assure us that that will be the first order of business after the Revolution.)

So you do hear the guy out—and discover that your exile "client" has mapped out a kamikaze gig that would cost roughly as much as the Normandy invasion. You realize this guy is not thinking militarily at all. *He is looking for publicity*. He wants you to stage a blood-and-guts publicity stunt.

Here's why.

There is a tremendous amount of money floating around, just waiting to be poured into the coffers of any group that looks like it may win any given power struggle

and take over its country. Any exile group that looks like a potential winner can reap a bonanza.

Exile movements worldwide number in the scores, most of them so limp operationally they can't afford office space. *But let them demonstrate a strike-force capability and money will flow.*

Sometimes a single strike is enough to loosen purse strings.

Exile and underground leaders know they can pick up heavy money by strikes that hit the headlines. The more publicity, the more money—never mind if people get killed needlessly or that the action is actually counterproductive. That's the main reason, incidentally, why terrorist groups scramble to claim credit for their latest atrocities—whether they committed them or not. "*Show me blood,*" say the financial sponsors, and in just those words. Sounds sick, but that's the way it is.

Let's assume that your client can already afford you and also has raised money to finance that spectacular strike he craves. You immediately run into two very sticky problems.

One is that your new patron already knows what he wants to do. He's already planned an action—planned and dreamed about it to the point of obsession. Invariably, it will be dazzling, real show biz, wildly suicidal (your suicide, not his), incredibly expensive (he won't believe the cost when you tell him), may get innocent people killed—an absolute no-no for real SOFs—and lastly, is guaranteed to drive the rest of the exile community into fits of envy.

Take a long look at that last item: It's the second problem. There are probably about 108 mutually hating exile

factions in his movement. *Any one of them is quite capable of sabotaging the others.*

This is a fact of mercenary life learned the hard way. *Beware of your boy's own fellow exiles.* They'll do you in, given a chance.

Moreover, *the exile movement was infiltrated by enemy agents even before it became a movement. Those agents moved right out in the same exodus into exile.* They are embedded in those groups, all right; count on it.

And don't consider yourself paranoid or overly conspiratorial. Don't get sensitive about being accused of a spies-under-the-bed mentality—not if you want to survive in this business. Instant infiltration of exile groups, as just mentioned, is standard procedure. In fact, *sometimes the guys on the other side are the founders of those groups.* Your side would like to be equally sneaky; unfortunately, your patrons will never be that well organized.

What it adds up to is an explosive mixture: internal rivalries, personal ambition, and enemy agents—all swirling around you and your exile clients.

But there is money to be made here. There is always at least a shred of potential in these little movements. In fact, one might say it as a flat statement: *There is no exile movement that cannot be turned into a moneymaker.*

First off, you've got to establish a sound client-consultant professional relationship. This can be trickier than you might think. Advise your exile leader—but don't ram your thinking down his throat; exiles are unpredictable when further humiliated.

So you treat your exile clients with courtesy and consideration for their bruised egos. Just the same, bear in mind

that the very reason these guys are in exile is that they're losers. Let them know you're aware of that—that by taking them on you're inheriting a losing streak . . . and that they need you more than you need them.

Which is true. You'll be combing exiles out of your hair. So if your particular clique won't play the game your way, go ahead and exercise your option—pick up your ball, bat, and dagger and go with another team. And the rest of his team will probably follow you.

It's true; you, as an outsider coming to their assistance, seem to represent far more in terms of substance than does their own tarnished leadership. In fact, about half the job of a merc working with an exile leader is pure show biz: you have to be onstage. Your exile leader wants to parade his new and mysterious heavy-hitter. This is very important to your patron—your shadowy presence at his side or behind him while he makes his up-front bid for support.

Two facts should be always with you when dealing with these people.

Pro-Western exile movements have taken a terrific pounding over the years. They have been abused, misused, and betrayed by Western governments. They are constantly denigrated. They've been used as fall guys in abortive operations around the world. Little wonder they're schizy. Whatever you do to them, it can't be worse than what has already been done by official agencies . . . but give them your best and you may be astounded by the real power you can wield.

These people number in the millions—and they're increasing by thousands daily. They're a whole new power in this world, even though they themselves don't know it.

Collectively, their political potential is vast; so is their money. I advise you to take them very seriously indeed. Whatever their occasional Mickey Mouse antics, you're dealing with potentially explosive power. Handle with care.

Vultures' Tip Sheet

You have a veritable cornucopia of losers and lost causes from which to choose. Stand by to go into your scavenger act in the following:

Mexico. "The big enchilada is going to blow," says one of my disreputable colleagues. "It's not a question of *if*," adds another, "the only question is *when*." That's the consensus of insiders of our ilk—and our Mexican colleagues.

Reputable sources make a case against the prospect of an exploding enchilada. Bankers know better. A 1983 *New York Times* financial article reported statements previously issued by the banks:

Chase Manhattan: "Nineteen eighty-two will be a banner year for Mexico." That was the year the Mexican economy collapsed.

Citibank: "Mexico is entitled to view its future with optimism." That was in 1981.

Bank of America: "Today, Mexican industry is developing dynamically in in many different directions." That was in 1981—and Bank of America is hurting for the \$2 billion it lent Mexico.

The above should indicate a market for your services. Even you could vastly improve on the intelligence and analysis of our international banking and business leaders. And they'll soon be desperately looking for the kind of

services you have to offer. To say the least, outsiders have an enormous stake in Mexico.

Rich Mexicans are already voting with their feet as well as their money regarding their evaluation of the country's future. They're bailing out, heading for California, Texas, Florida—and taking with them huge chunks of the \$90 billion dollars flung at them by those insane bankers. They're leaving behind financial and political desolation, crumbling state institutions, the impoverished masses, and an angry middleclass.

So the stage is set for the second Mexican Revolution. And once more, after seventy years, Mexico is again evolving into a merc market. As of now, Mexico is paralyzed by gridlock: incredible corruption/one-party dictatorship/high birthrate/low productivity. The situation can't last and won't. Explosive violence ahead. When? Our people estimate that the buzzards, now circling, will go into their descent about 1989–1990.

Mexico has plenty of company on vultures' row.

Also high on the losers list is the *Philippines*, despite ouster of strongman Ferdinand Marcos. The basic ingredients of violent upheaval are still in place: entrenched Communist clandestine and guerrilla infrastructure, incompetent politicians, a can't-cope military, a collapsing economy, soaring birthrate. Expect a very high Agency and Pentagon presence in this show.

Chile and *South Africa*, of course, are also building up to volcanic explosions. So is *Egypt*. *Haiti*, long sunk in misery and violence, is a permanent loser—the type you'd best back away from. So is *Pakistan*. Same for *Burma*. But

don't forget those Oriental gems, *Thailand* and *Hong Kong*.

Current losing wars include the contra guerrillas in their struggle against the Sandinista regime in *Nicaragua*—a war the contras were never intended to win. Same for *Afghanistan*, *Angola*, *Kampuchea*. *Mozambique*, despite enormous rebel potential, is also seemingly irreversibly locked into the Bloc. None of these losers offers any profit potential—but they may provide you a measure of satisfaction. It's a tragedy that these just causes are losers even by merc standards.

Keep your eye on that weird situation in *Surinam*: a bloody semiliterate dictator is propped up in power by secret arrangements among several intelligence agencies. Same is true in *Guyana*. Keep your distance from these two.

Morocco is a more attractive bet. Powerful political and economic pressures have been building up for years and King Hassan is going to need all the help he can get—and he's not at all averse to tapping the trade for expert assistance. *Colombia* is equally interesting. It's a country of vast wealth—oil, coffee, emeralds, coal, narcotics—which has been in the process of disintegration for years. At least ten guerrilla enclaves flourish; so do, of course, the narco-terrorist networks interlaced across the country and into world markets. The political-military-economic leadership is increasingly demoralized and long ago corrupted. Nobody knows how to cope. . . . Prime turf—but dangerous as hell. Much the same situation exists in *Peru*. And *Ecuador* is looking increasingly like its two neighbors.

Paraguay is also moving onto vulture's row, soon to join

such long-standing residents as *El Salvador* and *Guatemala*. In *Venezuela* the only thing keeping the lid on is the fact that CIA controls DISIP, the powerful state security agency. Even *Brazil*, that lovely land, is beginning to look a little dicey.

Final Briefing

You have to have a sense of humor literally to survive in this business. A sense of absurdity might be even better. That's because there's a real tendency in the twilight zone to mistake that fantasyland for the real world. You'll be operating in an environment of explosive emotions. They distort objective judgment. Fear is the most powerful of those emotions. Greed, lust for power, vengeance, raw hatred—those are also factors driving your clients to seek you out.

All right, the uglier passions are part of the human condition. They have spawned you, so don't put them down. But you can't afford to indulge yourself that way. You have to hang loose. It'll help if you don't take yourself too seriously. Heavy breathing is against the rules. At least it should be. It's the frenzied types who not only get themselves killed but mess up a lot of other people as well.

It'll also help you maintain balance if you avoid locking yourself into an endless cycle of violence. Take a break between each major foray.

For a real treat, combining profit potential with pleasure, I suggest you take off someday for the last great virgin—well, semivirgin—jungle left on earth: New Guinea in the South Pacific. It's a land of enormous untapped poten-

tial. You'll experience a jungle so violently green that it seems to glitter with menace, cool and misty mountain valleys, strange creatures from out of the Stone Age (human and otherwise), plus a mixed bag of dengue fever and jungle rot, valuable timber and gold.

Wherever you go, be alert for money-making opportunities. Most of you people aren't. You're too wrapped up in yourselves and your causes to think financially. Force yourself.

You'd also do well to crack a few textbooks on money and banking. Know what foreign exchange is all about, how tax havens operate, how to launder money, even the nuts and bolts of the precious-metals market and gemology. Zero in on the economics and finance of your operational area, not only for personal gain but also because you'll find that money and war (and mercenaries) are inextricably linked.

There are several other good reasons for you to break away frequently from the conflict scene and shift operational areas.

You pick up too many barnacles when you immerse yourself in one region for years. You've become too well known. You may know the area well—but it also knows you. You've become predictable. You've acquired too many associations, personal as well as professional, hostile as well as friendly. Time to shove off. . . .

Not to worry. You'll be back eventually. And once you've become professional in one area you'll find it easier to play the same role in another. Even so, old SOFs invariably return to their original haunts. You may not recognize the place—and if you're lucky it may not recognize you!

Wherever you are, whatever your status, you'll be having human relations problems. It's partly your fault. You generate a highly charged atmosphere just by being what you are. You'll have a tendency to just naturally be drawn to your counterparts in the profession—and if an interesting conflict situation is not handy, you and they will probably incite one. Unfortunately, some of your peers are nuts. Others have their own dangerous connections. And there is an amazing amount of petty personality and professional conflict between people in this way of life. Vanity and lust for recognition are rampant in a business in which ego-tripping is just plain irrational. So beware of your buddies. Constantly review and control your associations.

They'll be doing the same with you. So will your patrons. A constant in this business is that nobody trusts anybody. You can live with it. What is dangerous is when your side gets hit by sudden disaster or falls into a losing streak. Your patron and his people look around for scapegoats. The knives come out. . . .

On a less lethal level of personal relations, review the way you dress. Are you decked out in what looks like the remnants of a military garage sale? Or are you into T-shirts and bluejeans? In particular, do you don T-shirts imprinted with such witty and inspiring slogans as DEATH FROM ABOVE!?

If so, you'd do well to consider a change of attitude as well as dress. If you want to advertise yourself as a member of the second oldest profession, do it properly. Here's one SOF's off-to-the-wars wardrobe.

When they saw me off to war in Ethiopia I was wearing striped trousers, a gray homburg, and a monocle. My left hand wore one glove and carried the other glove and cane. They (the great SOFs of that era) looked and acted and were the aristocrats of war because they intended to march with kings and princes. The bluejean and sweat-shirt-clad present breed seeks and remains at the bottom level where the vocabulary consists of words of that level.

That could only be Hilaire du Berrier, and is. And the issue of dress is as important now as it was back then. What is still true is this, although du Berrier is too gentlemanly to make a financial observation on the subject: You dress and behave at that bottom level, you're going to get paid on that same level. Third World leaders are particularly sensitive to appearance and bearing. They have their own high-priced operators—top hard-men professionals—who are at ease in five-hundred-dollar suits and in the presence of the world's military, political, and financial elite. You've got to learn to mingle with the money masters and similar ilk and look as if you belong.

I wouldn't recommend du Berrier's striped trousers and homburg—but that monocle might be interesting. . . . Unlike you or me, somewhere out there is a mercenary soldier of fortune who has the steel balls needed to sport a monocle—and is possessed of enough easy arrogance to carry it off. That man will go far in this business. Such supreme self-assurance has real market value in a world beset by fear and uncertainty.

What you can do is aspire to a level of appearance and

performance such that if you did suddenly pop a monocle in your eye, it wouldn't seem utterly ridiculous. But don't.

As for your political aspirations, beware of formal ideology. It's excess baggage. If you feel the need of a creed, you'd do well to borrow what old Colonel Dean Lamb called his "code of the four negatives." They are:

I do not make war on noncombatants, betray a cause once served, oppose the United States, or serve the cause of Communism.

"In offering my sword or plane to embattled nations," Lamb noted, "I have followed the example of a host of illustrious predecessors and contemporaries."

You are now the contemporary.

For better or worse, you have come along at a unique point in world history: the *coyuntura* of the soldier of fortune. The instruments of great change are available to you. Precisely how you will use them, no one can yet say. But remember that while tomorrow might belong to you, there are those who would make you belong to them. Watch yourself . . . and them.

God bless. And don't take any False Flags.

Mercenary War, Money, and Adventure

“The Whores of War.” That’s the term used to describe the modern mercenary soldier. No longer a hired gun, today’s mercenary must walk an ever-exciting but always dangerous tightrope amongst ruthless warlords, paranoid *generalissimos*, wealthy businessmen, rebel leaders, greedy informants and fellow freelancers. It’s the ultimate thrilling career, but one that can end with a bullet to the back of the head instead of a retirement dinner and pension!

Whether you’re a retired soldier or a seeker of adventure, *Manual of the Mercenary Soldier: A Guide to Mercenary War, Money, and Adventure* covers everything you need to know about today’s soldier of fortune, including the five best entry routes into the mercenary ways of life, the most transferable skills, specialized aspects of mercenary orientation and operations, taking advantage of the biggest money-making opportunities, and much more. In this authoritative insider’s guide, Paul Balor reveals the experiences, tricks of the trade, and hard-learned lessons that have kept him alive on three continents for over four decades!

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